FOX-HUNTING PAST & PRESENT

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FOX-HUNTING PAST & PRESENT

LORD LONSDALE, M.F.H. THE COTTESMORE

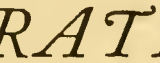
(Photograph by Messrs. Mayall & Co., Ltd., 73 Piccadilly, W.)

FOX-HUNTING PAST & PRESENT

BY R. H. CARLISLE

("HAWK EYE," LATE 14TH P.W.O. REGIMENT)

WITH EIGHT FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS



"Not Handel's sweet music delighteth the ear,
So much as the hounds in full cry"

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PREFACE

It is patent to any readers of this work, that one double or treble the size could easily have been compiled dealing with "The Sport of Kings"; these salient features, concerning "Sport with Horse and Hound," have been discussed as "Fox-hunting Past and Present," with the hope that they may interest the few, if not the many, by the author.

London, 1908.

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FOX-HUNTING
PAST & PRESENT

CHAPTER I

FOX-HUNTING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

"Here's many a year to you!
Sportsmen who've ridden life straight.
Here's all good cheer to you!
Luck to you early and late.

Here's to the best of you!
You with the blood and the nerve.
Here's to the rest of you!
What of a weak moment's swerve?
Face the grim fence, gate, or wall again:
Ride hard and straight in the van,
Life is to dare and deserve!"

1908.

It is generally admitted that the conditions under which hunting is carried on have materially altered; however, there were never more rich men engaged in the sport than now. Every one knows that fox-hunting is more expensive than it used to be, and the subscription should be the most important and carefully considered item of every man's hunting outlay.

Fox-hunting Past and Present

Pessimists have from time to time averred that the sport is doomed and its days numbered to twenty-five years. Sixty odd years ago the same was prophesied. So far, railways have not ended the sport. Wire-fencing has come more into vogue, and pheasant-rearing in some countries is of colossal proportions, and the fox is not everywhere held in the same veneration as formerly. To counterbalance all this, however, the farmer is treated in a much more business-like manner than formerly: his wishes and his claims for poultry damage are listened to with a ready ear; also his damage to crops, if any, and these should be few. "Ware wheat!" How often do you not hear it, or, rather, should you not hear it, in the early spring? Then there are many men who will also buy their forage from the county farmers. Then there are many counties where the hunting feeling is paramount, and vulpicide execrated. Here, however, you would probably note that pheasant-rearing on any large scale is not attempted. Then, say, forty miles farther on, you will find the opposite state of affairs exists. Things go on fairly smoothly here for a time, perchance, as the system of "putting down" foxes obtains in this country or hunt, call it which you like. A keeper here would own up to fox-destroying. Men, however, in good positions in a county have before now been branded with the stigma of

vulpicide—even lost elections and left their home thereby. The country that possesses fox-hunting and game-preserving, swinging in the balance of popularity, also offers food for thought. It really behoves both sections to meet each other half-way. All M.F.H.'s usually respect shooters' wishes as to drawing coverts.

Many packs have to confine their autumn hunting to districts not shot over, where pheasants are scarce. Hounds, in some hunts, are not taken to coverts that are doubtful, which does not pay, as it encourages vulpicide. The master and his followers therefore require to exercise much tact and diplomacy. Hunt balls, point to point races, hunt breakfasts, and hunt dinners help to smooth down much of the friction. Capping, though not universal, has had to be introduced, especially in the larger and more important hunts which are greatly visited by strangers. Then there is the "minimum subscription" to be paid by all members of a hunt. Where this is very high the sport becomes one entirely for the rich. Take, for instance, a man with one horse, where the minimum subscription is £40; that is in the Quorn country. Many others range from £25 to £35. This works out, in the former instance, at £2 per day, for the average hunter does not do much more than twenty days per season, taking into account the chance of being laid up by illness,

lameness, sore back, or other complaints. Therefore it is only feasible there should be a sliding scale in favour of residents who cannot in justice pay the full amount. In many provincial districts there is a poultry and damage fund, and to this men who are not members, or who hunt but seldom, can and do pay.

In some counties there is not so much hunting with neighbouring packs as there used to be. I mean in the case of meets on the borders of two hunts, so that the hunting-man is expected to subscribe to each pack they hunt with. This hits keen hunting-men in the Midlands very hard, who hunted and subscribed to a pack and took occasional days with others. At Melton, Market Harborough, Rugby, and Leamington, Leicester, and Oakham also, those hunting five or six days a week have to subscribe to three or four packs. Capping has not brought in much money, but it has checked the size of the fields. It is not a hunting rent at all, but to lessen the damage to fences and land. It guarantees that all who do hunt pay for their sport.

I must needs recount you here a few reflections on the longevity of hunting-men and records they have made. Any one who wants to peruse a splendid record of hunting achievements I commend to Col. Anstruther-Thomson's "Eighty Years' Reminiscences;" a masterpiece in its way. The

doyen of masters in his day, I need hardly say they have been equalled but by few, surpassed by none. However, I pass on to others forthwith. This season Mr. Knott attended his seventy-fourth opening meet of the Bicester pack at Fenny Compton Wharf; his memory must therefore go back to the day when the first Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake hunted this pack. Here is another instance: Mr. J. T. Powell attended the sixty-second opening meet of the Tedworth, so he can recall the famous "Assheton Smith" as M.F.H. in this county. Every country has its "Father of the Hunt," though he may be consigned to seeing the "best of the fun" on wheels. I well remember the late Mr. George Lane-Fox riding to his Bramham Moor hounds in the late eighties. He must have been then nearly seventy. The Vale of Lime Hunt has a follower, Mr. R. Gillow, aged ninety-eight; and Mr. R. Abbot of the Bilsdales is ninety-three or ninety-four. So there is abundant proof that, barring accident, hunting is conducive to long life, health, and happiness.

I remember the late Mr. John Lawrence, formerly M.F.H. of the Llangibby, lived to ninety-four, though unable to ride to hounds during the last six or seven years of his life. This is the next country to the Monmouthshire. Mr. W. E. Curre being now master, his brother, Mr. J. Curre, is huntsman. Mr. Lawrence's hunting career, it

is estimated, totalled seventy-six years, his first hunting connection being the Cwmbran harriers. Anyhow, at Biggleswade Mr. G. Race still keeps a pack of harriers, and started his sixty-seventh season this year (1906–1907) as M.H.; so his is a record. He has passed the late Mr. J. Crosier's total seasons, viz. sixty-four, with the Blencathra, a wild Cumberland country. No longer an M.F.H., Mr. R. Watson has nearly sixty seasons to his credit with the Carlow foxhounds. But he can still hold his own with the Meath's, where that doyen of polo-players, his son, Mr. J. Watson, holds the reins of management. There is a wish that many of those good sportsmen to hounds to-day may celebrate their jubilees in due course; such as the late Mr. Garth did, who had half a century's mastership before retirement; Mr. T. W Knolles, M.F.H. in South Union, Ireland, fifty years or more; Mr. E. Trewlett, in Devonshire, a like period in the Rev. J. Russell's time. Then, from 1806–1858 Mr. Farquharson hunted a large tract of country, comprising South Dorset, much of the Blackmore Vale, and Cattistock—six days a week at his own expense; Mr. Boothby holds the Quorn record of fifty-five years, and Mr. J. Warde was M.F.H. of so many counties for nearly as long. Mr. Assheton Smith was an M.F.H. for fifty years in all.

It is possible for many men who are not hard

riders to hunt and enjoy it, and be fairly efficient M.F.H.'s and perhaps huntsmen. In some cases masters who do not jump are to be found in a flying county; they sometimes increase their pack's speed. The sportsmen above alluded to, although in the minority among hunting-men, include many whose knowledge of hounds and the sport is of the highest. There are four classes of hunting men, roughly. Those who hunt to ride. Those who ride to hunt, and ride hard, see the best of the sport, are the cream of the field and the most permanent members of the community. Then there are those who love hunting, cannot stay away but hardly ever see a run through—they may jump, but do not gallop. In the evening they bewail their luck, nerve, or resolution. Lastly there are those who never jump, and acknowledge they do not intend to do so. Many of them see a good deal of sport, and are generally up at the finish, for they study the country, the foxes' and the hounds' idiosyncrasies. The moral therefore is, when you find your nerves fail, and the favourite hunter does not give confidence, study gates and gaps, and make up your mind never to jump at all. Then you may take an active part in hunting till you are no longer able to mount a horse.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN OF FOX-HUNTING—A GLIMPSE AT MELTON TO-DAY AND AS IT WAS IN ITS INFANCY

"What sports can compare to the sports of the field?
Full lasting and choice are the blessings they yield;
Sure the gods were resolved when they fashioned the hare,
To favour mankind in a manner quite rare."

—*Sporting Magazine*, 1793.

THE flight of society to the shires in such numbers is substantial proof of what fox-hunting is to the country. Some years have elapsed since a writer made out an estimate of nine millions per annum spent on hunting. This sum appears to be prodigious, and so, indeed, it is, if only applied to kennel establishments. There are 204 packs of hounds in the United Kingdom, of which some could show an expenditure of £10,000 a year, and many over £4000. This is, however, but the small side of the total costs, as many thousand studs of hunters are maintained, representing an enormous amount of money, with veritable armies of employees, mansions of almost the proportions of palaces in nearly every quarter of England, Ireland, and Scotland, and a trade thereby in provincial towns that must of necessity be of considerable

magnitude. A morning view of Melton is quite suggestive of this computation of £9,000,000, as at an early hour there will be whole troops of hunters passing up the town for exercise, and inquiry tells you to whom this or that lot belong. They seem as numerous as the thoroughbreds in High Street, Newmarket, and you are led to believe also that they are nearly as valuable. You walk out of the hotel before breakfast, and ask about the various big houses dotted about on all sides, and hear that this one has been taken by a foreign prince with a fabulous fortune, and that his stud numbers thirty. A little farther on you ask again, and the reply gives the name of a well-known millionaire; and then there is the residence of a noble lord, who has done the right thing at Melton for many seasons. Every house let on tenancy appears to be taken, and many others belong to their owners as hunting-boxes for the season. All the apartments in the hotels will be full by the second week in November, and lodgings of every kind will then be at a premium. Everything in the near preparation of the Melton season indicates immense wealth, and duplicates of the same in smaller degrees are Leamington, Cheltenham, Rugby, York, Grantham, Cirencester, and other centres from which ladies and gentlemen can get their six days' hunting a week.

The conditions that have altered the whole tone

of society, and perhaps the very constitution of the country, belong to no very remote times. A hundred and fifty years ago there were generations of nobles and squires who lived on their own acres and were satisfied with a visit once or twice a year to London or York. They shot and hunted over their estates in a quiet sort of way, lived well, and were inclined to much hospitality, but there it ended. It would appear from records that a Mr. Thomas Noel first conceived the idea of going where he pleased over territories in which he was not in the least concerned, but with, apparently, no hindrance from owners or tenants. He hunted periodically over Leicestershire, Warwickshire, and part of Derbyshire, until some division of responsibility was ceded to Mr. T. Boothby, the acknowledged first Master of the Quorn. It was all a very slow order of hunting, though. The drag of a fox was generally found at daybreak, and hunted up to his lair, or, otherwise, if found later, he might be hunted all day. A very wealthy young gentleman failed to see anything very exhilarating in this sort of sport, and believed that something more could be made of the hounds then in use. This gentleman was Mr. Hugo Meynell, and records determine that he was only nineteen at the time he took upon himself the responsibilities of M.F.H. At any rate he soon succeeded in breeding a much faster hound than had been seen before, and he had also

Yours truly
George Osbaldeston

many contemporaries in the next twenty years (which brought the date up to 1770) who were quite as keen about hound-breeding as himself —Mr. Charles Pelham, afterwards first Lord Yarborough, Lord Granby, Sir Roland Winn, Sir Thomas Gascoign, Sir Walter Vavasour, Mr. Willoughby, and Mr. E. Legard forming quite a little band in giving their strenuous efforts towards the improvement of the foxhound. Mr. Hugo Meynell, though, was the first to give the foxhound the opportunity to show his true character in hunting a fox. He was observant of the forward cast, and when hounds raced on a line the fox in front of them went straighter and faster. The dash of the foxhound was thus assured, and the try back of the southern hound or harrier entirely superseded. Then, again, Mr. Meynell devised how hounds should be ridden to. Always driving in front, there was nothing to prevent horsemen living with them, and so came about the boldness and skill in getting over a country that has been unique to the Briton born. Melton became the metropolis of the new system by about 1780, when men were riding harder than Mr. Meynell altogether liked, as they rode over his hounds. The sport, though, had become immensely popular and was spreading everywhere. Foxhounds, by their deeds in the field, had got into extraordinary repute, and it appeared to be pretty generally

understood that they could beat horses both for speed and stamina. In the general furore concerning them came about the matches towards the end of the century, when Mr. Meynell backed some of his hounds to run against those of Mr. Barry, a Cheshire sportsman, over four miles at Newmarket on a drag. Enough was seen to show that hounds are faster than horses, as only three horsemen out of sixty were with them at the finish, but, fortunately for posterity, Mr. Meynell was not satisfied with the way in which his hounds were beaten, and so the matchmaking in which hounds were concerned went very little farther.

It was fortunate also that a number of enthusiastic sportsmen went in for hunting and hound-breeding, as if it was one of the first duties of man, and thought of little else. The consequence was a continued improvement in hounds under such disciples of the chase as Lord Darlinton, Lord Vernon, Lord Monson, Lord Middleton, Colonel Thornton, Mr. John Warde, Mr. John Musters, and Mr. Corbet. It may be regarded as somewhat extraordinary that men of great social position should have almost spent their lives in hunting and the culture of hounds, and that their examples were closely followed by others of a later generation that counted Assheton Smith, Lord Henry Bentinck, Osbaldeston, and Mr. G. S. Foljambe, but it must be said of all that they created the

power of the foxhound, and there is much to show that a good deal of England's greatness is due to that influence. The daring deeds under the greatest difficulties in the Peninsular War, the important conquests all over the globe with mere handfuls of men, and the hardihood of our earliest colonists came about after the hard-riding era had commenced, and the Iron Duke always insisted that his best officers were the first flight men of Leicestershire and Lincolnshire, and he gave his opinion that Assheton Smith would have been the best cavalry general in the world. Then, again, the horses were improved by Hugo Meynell's discovery of that forward dash of the foxhound, and by its subsequent development, as no one could have believed in the manner of horses getting over a country unless it had been for that system of following hounds at high pressure. The horses were as much elated by the voice of the hound in full cry as the men, and to jump quite extraordinary fences that could not have been taken in cool blood stamped the character of the English hunter and made him really the utility horse for all nations. The country was therefore enriched by foreign trade, and it can certainly be all traced to a system that strangers have always considered very remarkable. Frenchmen declare that it would have been out of all reason to establish a free-and-easy, go-as-you-please policy such as has been

attributed to Mr. Thomas Noel, and still more so that it has continued ever since. Anthony Trollope in one of his charming romances depicts the astonishment of the American, that because people hunted they could go over lands of others as if it all belonged to them. The national respect for the foxhound has had much to do with it, though. He is bred at the kennels, but in many cases belongs to the hunting country in which his lot is cast, then he is walked by a member of the hunt, or more frequently by a friend of the same, one of those who have no objection to their lands being ridden over. In the times of Assheton Smith, and even in those of Lord Henry Bentinck, the pups' walking was all done for honour and glory, but of late years three or four silver cups were presented to those who rear the best. This new development has added to the spirit of the cause. A couple or three years back a puppy was taken by an old stone-breaker in Lord Middleton's hunt. The little thing in her small days would lie upon his coat all day on a near heap of stones, sharing his bread and cheese at noon, and certain of a good supper at night. She proved the best of the bitch entry, and the cup went to the stone-breaker. Lord Middleton kindly thought that a five-pound note would be more acceptable than the cup, and so sent that proposal. "Na, na," said the road-maker, "I might spend the money, but the

coup I'll keep in memory of her." This is the English view in all classes towards the foxhound, and he is no ordinary animal to be the national favourite. He has been brought to wonderful perfection in beauty and frame; he is quite untireable; foxes may run for miles through parishes and almost counties, to bring horses to every kind of grief and distress, but the hounds will not be beaten. They will be always showing the same dash over plough or pasture, ridge or furrow, and leave every kind of fence behind them, amid a music of their own which is charming.

Other countries have hounds, mostly poor drafts from England, but they are not at all the same as the genuine coin of this kingdom, and, moreover, foreigners cannot breed foxhounds. The shades of Hugo Meynell, G. S. Foljambe, Assheton Smith, and Lord Henry Bentinck have never departed, and their followers may now be more numerous than ever, but, like communities of mankind, the foxhounds themselves are in various degrees of character and individualism, and this has been fully understood and appreciated by the past-masters who have bred them. Mr. Corbet, in a long experience, believed in his day that nothing could touch Trojan in any part of a run or for his extraordinary intelligence, and Lord Middleton (Lord Henry, as he was always called) was generous to a degree in giving away good hounds; but

when it came to Vanguard, the best he thought he had ever hunted, he declared he was much too good to give away to any one. Osbaldeston was so enraptured with Furrier that, years after he had relinquished the horn and the saddle, he would start at the very mention of the name if even playing an interesting game of billiards, and then nothing would get him off Furrier. Lord Henry Bentinck was never emotional, but when coming in his diary to Contest he says: "A most remarkable hound, that could not well do wrong." Then there was old Harry Ayris, so long with the Lord Fitzhardinge's. He would seemingly forget gout and old age at a question about Cromwell, as he showed you his skin on which he rested his feet. The best hound in the world—there was never another like him. He would find a fox if there was one within a mile of him, and go to the front to put them right everywhere. You could not get him off the line of Cromwell in an afternoon, as he would tell you of the death of the old earl, and how he was ordered to take up two couples to his bedside just before he died, and although Cromwell was only a second-season hunter he took him up, and the old lord just looked up and said, "There could not be better ones, Harry," and those were his last words. "I saw he was sinking. I feared I might hurt him, so bundled the hounds out as quick as I could, choked as I was with grief."

There was Smith of the Broklesby, too, with his love for the foxhound that had its place at his death as he murmured softly to his son, "Stick to Ranter." There are those still alive who have the same feelings. Lord Coventry would almost hesitate in any conversation at the very mention of Rambler. Mr. E. Rawnsley, the Master of the Southwold for a quarter of a century, would show commendable feeling in referring to Freeman, and Frank Gillard would talk for a day about the merits of the Belvoir Weather-gage. What is it that brings the foxhound so close to the heart of the sportsman? Is it not the same influence that started the breed early in the seventeen-hundreds, and maintained it through generations of enthusiasts, the like of Charles Pelham, John Corbet, John Warde, Lord Middleton, and Assheton Smith, and the question is — Would fox-hunting have grown to what it is without them?

CHAPTER III

THE QUORN HUNT

"Next Dick Knight and Smith Assheton we spy in the van,
Riding hard as two furies at catch that catch can.
'Now, Egmont,' says Assheton,
'Now, contract,' says Dick;
'By gosh! these d——d Quornites shall now see the trick.'
No Northamptonshire hunters for me."

A Mr. Boothby of Tooley Park, Leicestershire, first commenced to hunt this country at his own expense from 1698 to 1753. In that almost "prehistoric age" hounds changed hands but seldom. The present Quorn country forms a part of this country. However, the immortal Meynell established the glory of the Quorn hounds and his forty-seven years' mastership in 1753. The hounds then were kept at Great Bowden Inn, on the borders of Northamptonshire; the master, or joint-masters (Mr. Boothby bore half the burden of the expenses) lived then at Langton Hall. A little later Mr. Meynell removed to Quorndon Hall, and thence the pack took its famous name. In those days there were no woodlands within the limits of the country, and so Meynell used to stoop his hounds to hare in the spring to keep them handy for fox in October. This did not, as may be

imagined, result in universal steadiness. "The Druid" tells a story of a brilliant burst of twenty minutes after a hare ending with a kill on the turnpike road. "Ah!" observed the philosophical master, "there are days when they will hunt anything." Lord Sefton followed Meynell, and did things in an imperial manner, with two packs and two huntsmen, and everything on like scale. His lordship was the first to introduce the custom of second horsemen. He was a very heavy man, and stopped for nothing, so that no horse could live under him for more than ten minutes if hounds ran hard. But he had a grand stud, nearly all thoroughbred and as large as dray-horses; and with three or even four out at a time he managed to hold his own with the light-weights. Then arose the star of Melton, which still shines, if not with quite such supreme lustre. From 1805 to 1807 Lord Foley was king, and then came the great Assheton Smith, who ruled for ten years, and was succeeded by "Squire" Osbaldeston. In 1821 Osbaldeston went into Hampshire, changing quarters with Sir Bellingham Graham; but the change did not last long, and in 1823 "the Squire" was back in Quorndon, Sir Bellingham going into the Albrighton country.

Both Assheton Smith and Osbaldeston hunted their own hounds, and in that capacity Dick Christian, who, thanks to "The Druid," is our

main authority for those golden days, did not think very nobly of either of them. The former drew his coverts too quickly, and so "drew over his fox scores of times." Also, "he was very uncertain: sometimes he would not lift his hounds at all," and, adds the veteran, "you must lift, and lose no time if you want runs in Leicestershire with those big fields." One quality, however, he had, sure to have been appreciated by those big, eager fields: "he was always for being away as quick as possible." It was his maxim that the best fox always broke first; and after the first that broke off he would go, often with only three or four couples of hounds. This, no doubt, entailed a tremendous burst, but at the first check as often as not the run was spoiled. "The Squire" seems to have been still more "uncertain." "He was the oddest man you ever saw at a covert-side. He would talk for an hour: then he would half draw, and talk again, and often blow his horn when there was no manner of occasion—always so chaffy." But he is allowed to have been "very keen of the sport," and to have got away with his fox "like a shot"; while, for sheer riding, his great rival Dick vowed, "no man that ever came into Leicestershire could beat Mr. Smith; I don't care what any of them says." The pick of the country is to be had from Melton.

CAPT. F. FORESTER, M.F.H. QUORN

(Photograph by Mr. J. Herbert Wilson, Leicester and Coalville)

Lord Southampton followed "the Squire." He bought the Oakley pack in 1829, built new kennels at Leicester, and the hounds were called after his name instead of by their own title. To him succeeded Sir Harry Goodriche, and he paid all expenses out of his own pocket. He, too, built new kennels at Thrussington, midway between Melton and Leicester, and a much more convenient place than the latter. His early death in 1833 left the hounds to Mr. Francis Holyoake, who subsequently took the name of Goodriche. In his time a part of the Quorn country was handed over to the second Marquis of Hastings, who started the Donnington country, afterwards hunted by Lord Ferrers. Two seasons were enough for Mr. Holyoake, and three for Mr. Errington. His next successor, Lord Suffield, spent a great deal of money, building new kennels and stabling at Billesdon, giving Mr. Lambton 3000 guineas for his hounds. But the sport, for some cause or another, was not equal to the cost, and after one season he gave place to Mr. Hodgson of Holderness fame, who brought his hounds with him from Yorkshire. It was in his reign that Assheton Smith, then in his sixty-fifth year, brought his hounds from Tedworth for a fortnight into Leicestershire. The opening day was at Rolleston Hall, when it is calculated upwards of 2000 people were present; an historic meet this was.

After Mr. Hodgson came Mr. Greene of Rolleston, a fine sportsman, who figures in the great "Quarterly" run as skimming over the Whissendine on his bay mare, "like a swallow on a summer's evening." In 1847 Sir Richard Sutton succeeded him; he had won a great name in the Burton and Cottesmore countries. In 1857 the latter took the Donnington country back, and then finding the whole rather too large to be properly hunted by one pack, he handed a part of it over to his son, Mr. Richard Sutton, building him kennels at Skeffington.

No man ever showed better sport in Leicestershire than Sir Richard, and when he died at the beginning of the season of 1855, it was a bad day for the Quorn. Young Sir Richard and Captain Frank Sutton finished the season, and then Lord Stamford came to the front, with a pack composed largely of old hounds and a good draft from Mr. Anstruther-Thomson's kennels, whose memoirs we have lately read. In this mastership Mr. Tailby took a portion of the Quorn country together with part of the Cottesmore, and showed rare sport up to 1871, when the latter, according to agreement, reverted to its original lords, and Mr. Tailby continued for some seasons longer to content himself with two days a week in the diminished province now governed by Sir Bache Cunard. After Lord Stamford, who kept the

hounds for seven seasons, Mr. Clowes followed for three; and then came the reign of the Marquis of Hastings, which lasted for two. Mr. Musters came next, with a good pack of hounds out of South Nottinghamshire. After three years he divided his country with Mr. Coupland, and after two more took his pack with him back to his own country, and Mr. Coupland was left to his own resources. He was unlucky at first, having bought the Craven pack, voted slow for Leicestershire. But the famous Tom Firr came to him in 1872 from the North Warwickshire, and matters soon became more lively. Mr. Coupland managed matters till the season of 1884-85, when Lord Manners succeeded; and so we pass from the domain of history to more recent times when Captain Warner came on the scenes for four years, 1886-90, and joined hands with Mr. W. B. Paget for three more.

Lord Lonsdale then rendered the pack sterling service for five years; his reign was a popular one indeed. However, a worthy successor to him was found in Captain Burns-Hartopp, who held the reins of management from 1898–1904. After suffering a severe hunting accident in the previous season, he resigned, to the regret of very many. Now, however, Lord Lonsdale has continued his family connection as head of the historic Cottesmore pack.

Melton Mowbray is, of course, the cardinal point of this famous hunting-ground, though not the central one. There hounds are comparatively close at hand every day in the week. It rarely happens that a ride of ten miles at most will not find them, and a ride to covert in Leicestershire has been declared by an enthusiast to be better than a run anywhere else in the world. From this little paradise, isled in a sea of grass, you get the Quorn on Mondays and Fridays; on Tuesdays, the Cottesmore; on Wednesday, the Belvoir; on Thursday comes either a by-day with the Quorn or one of Sir Bache Cunard's northern meets; on Saturday, the Belvoir and the Cottesmore are alternately at your door. To take all the goods thus lavishly provided a large stud is a necessity. True, as "Brooksby" says, six thoroughly well-seasoned nags, with the inevitable cast-iron hack (who must both jump and gallop more than a bit) will carry you through the season if you have luck, and here and there a timely frost comes to help. Some men can certainly get more out of one horse than many can out of two. But even the cleverest and most saving rider must lose much of the fun if he makes Melton his headquarters with only six hunters in his stable.

The best sport in this country comes generally in the afternoon, when the coffee-housers have gone home, and hounds have a chance. But

although you may have had no sport in the morning, there has almost certainly been enough work, what with trotting or galloping from one covert to another, a short scurry here and another there, to take the morning steel out of your horse. Then what are you to do? Go home with the crowd, or stay and play second fiddle to your happier fellows on their fresh horses; or come to inevitable grief in a brave attempt to show them the way on your tired one? As to not hunting every day from Melton, that never entered into any human head. So, though undoubtedly Melton was made for man to hunt from, it is not every man (nor horse either) was made to hunt from Melton.

It was quite in the right order of things that a Forester should once more rule over a Leicestershire hunt. It is years ago since George, second Lord Forester resigned the mastership of the Belvoir hounds, after a reign which some regard as the golden age of that historic hunt. In 1905 another Forester, a relative, too, of the famous "Cecil" and "George" Foresters of Melton fame, became Master of the Quorn. Captain Frank Forester, of Saxilbye Hall, was formerly in the 3rd Hussars, and had been twice Master of Hounds of the Limerick Hunt, and of the old Berkshire. He is also well known as an owner of racehorses, and won the Lincoln Handicap in 1904. But what

was more to the purpose, he is a fine horseman, and a front-rank man over a country. He is able to restrain his field from the front, and all hunting men know that "keep back" is more effectual than "come back," when thrusters have to be held in check. On the committee that elected him were his three predecessors, and none should know better than they what is needed for a Master of the Quorn. His fine judgment in, and knowledge of, horse-flesh enables him to mount his men well for a country that has grass and plough, hill and plain, woodland and open. If he had no property in the neighbourhood he had a family connection with the town of Melton, which is said to have been discovered by a Forester who wished for a convenient hunting centre in the best of the grass, and not too far from Belvoir Castle. Captain Forester was born at Somerley in the shires, and there as a boy he tasted the sweets of fox-hunting. A cruel fall over the Punchestown double, when he was in the 3rd Hussars, might have cost Captain Forester his life. Happily for the Quorn, however, this did not come to pass.

These lines were penned by Mr. Bethel Cox as an attribute to the famous Billesden Coplow run of February 24, 1800. Four gentlemen only, besides Jack Raven, the huntsman, saw the finish. Mr. Hugo Meynell was then master.

"Two hours and a quarter, I think, was the time ;
It was beautiful—great—indeed 'twas sublime :
Not Meynell himself, the king of all men,
E'er saw such a chase, or will e'er see again.
Tom Smith in the contest maintained a good place ;
Tho' not first up at last, made a famous good race.
I'm sure he's no reason his horse to abuse,
Yet I wish he'd persuade him to keep on his shoes.
You must judge by the nags that were in at the end,
What riders to quiz, and what to commend."

Without any aspersion on the Quorn hunt field of the present day—and the first-flighters are quicker after hounds now than they were in those days of long ago—I quote "Post and Paddock," by the Druid.

"The greatest riding period with the Quorn was generally allowed to be that of Lords Jersey, Germaine, and Forester, and Messrs. Cholmondeley (afterwards Lord Delamere), Assheton Smith, Lindow, and his twin-brother, Mr. Rawlinson. The latter was as famous over Leicestershire on Spread Eagle as he was on the turf. He won the Derby with Coronation in 1841. Sir Henry and his brother, Mr. Alfred Rawlinson, are equally well known at Hurlingham and Ranelagh to-day. The latter especially as a member of the 17th Lancers team and Freebooter's quartette.

"It used to be said that Mr. Rawlinson's riding was the better for his horse, but that Mr. Lindow sold his horses better." "Mr. Meynell was like a regular little apple-dumpling on horseback ; Mr.

Assheton Smith and Lord Forester, they were the men for me. Lord Jersey, too, my word! he was very good; and Sir C. Knightley, he was one of Lord Jersey's stamp. How he would go, to be sure! He would be with the hounds to see them work. Blame me, but I've seen him at the end of a run all blood and thorns. Mr. Smith never galloped his horses at fences: he always drew them up. He had little, low-priced horses when he first came to the Quorn country, but he rode them so as no man will again, and they would do anything: get into bottoms and jump out of them like nothing. And how hardy he made them!

"Those were different days. You might find at Melton Spinney and run to Billesdon Coplow, and not cross a ploughed field. I have seen Mr. Holyoake (afterwards Sir F. Goodriche) go like distraction for fifteen minutes, but Mr. Smith and Mr. Greene, Mr. Gilmour and Lord Wilton, they were the men to go when others were leaving off."

Among the foremost of Mr. Assheton Smith's field with the Quorn was Colonel Wyndham (Scots Greys), who returned to England after Waterloo. No fence ever stopped him, and he weighed sixteen stone. When he could not get over, he got through. Now and again a bullfinch seemed impenetrable; the field would cry out, "Where's

Wyndham?" and he soon made a gap large enough.

The following lines were written in commemoration of Mr. Smith's famous (and then record) meet at Rolleston Hall in 1840. He rented the house for some years, and it was here the Quorn, Pytchley, and Cottesmore fields all met. Since then there have been many tenants of this favourite hunting box, including the late Mr. Mosley, my ancestor, the present owner Sir Oswald Mosley, and now Lord Churchill.

"On Ajax, a nag well in Leicestershire known,
See the gallant Tom Smith make a line of his own;
Though in dirt fetlock deep, he ne'er dreams of a fall,
And in mounting the hill, why, he passes them all."

Representative polo teams of the Quorn and Pytchley have more than once opposed one another at Ranelagh in the Hunt Cup competitions in later years.

CHAPTER IV

THE MASTER OF HOUNDS

THE great masters of antiquity, if we may so style them—Meynell, Beckford, Corbet, Lee Anthone, John Warde, Ralph Lambton, Musters—have been described as paragons of politeness as well as models of keenness. George Osbaldeston hardly possessed the former quality in so marked a degree. Coming to present times, I cite as examples the late Lord Penrhyn, Lords Portman, Lonsdale, and Harrington, and Mr. R. Watson of Carlow, Mr. J. Watson (Meath), Captain Burns-Hartopp, and Captain Forester, eminently successful masters. Last but not least the eighth and present Dukes of Beaufort.

Money! money! money! is perhaps the most important attribute after keenness and temper. A real keen 'un will generally get a country. Happy is the country possessing a master with these qualifications, and they are by no means easy to acquire—the boldness of a lion, the cunning of a fox, the shrewdness of an exciseman, the calculation of a general, the decision of a judge, the purse of Squire Plutus, the regularity of a railway, liberality of a philanthropist, the polite-

ness of a lord, the strength of a Hercules, the thirst of a Bacchus, the appetite of a Dando, a slight touch of Cicero's eloquence; even more so when the field overrides badly, and a temper as even as the lines of a copybook. So says "The Analysis of the Hunting Field."

Lor' bless us, what a combination of qualities! An M.P. is generally supposed to have a ticklish, uphill game to play. The M.F.H. has just as difficult a one. He has to keep his soft-sawder pot boiling all the year round, healing real or imaginary wounds, both of his field and the farmer's as to poultry and damage. Possessing, as our model M.F.H. is supposed to, the patience of Job, and the tact of an M.P., he can only be written down as "the best fellow under the sun." They must have these same qualities, and may have very different ways of showing them. About the keenness there must be "no mistake," as the great Duke of Wellington would have said. A qualified liking would not do for a "best fellow under the sun." He must be a real out and outer. Keenness covers a multitude of sins. City people, perhaps, would put money first, but that shows they know nothing of fox-hunting. Wealth, birth, keenness, all combined, won't do unless he has the sincere desire to please, and the desire not to hurt any one's feelings unnecessarily. Making too much of a busi-

ness of hunting makes nervous and irritable masters. "Better luck next time" is a fine consoling axiom, cheering alike to fox-hunter, gunner, and fisherman. Fox-hunting, being a sport, whether a fox is killed, or a fox is lost, or a fox is mobbed, or a fox is earthed, makes no difference in the balance at the bankers.

On the principle that a new broom sweeps clean, gentlemen taking the onus upon them of M.F.H. are apt to slave and toil like servants. The fox-hunter goes out to "fresh fields and pastures new," hears all the news, the fun, the nonsense, the gossip of the world; his mind enlarged, his spirits raised, his body refreshed, and he comes back full of life and animation.

Dining out is almost indispensable for an M.F.H., for friendship can only be riveted over a mahogany. It is convenient, too, in some cases, such as hunting a distant part of the country. An agreeable change this, if the party have not been hobnobbing at the county club for weeks together. One of the mistakes non-hunting people used to make: "None but fox-hunters will do to meet fox-hunters." We have changed all that now. In a few hunts at any rate hunt dinners are still in vogue. These reunions among members of hunts have somewhat lapsed; not so the balls in January and February.

To discuss further the duties of the would-be

THE MARQUIS OF ZETLAND, K.P.

successful master, I quote from Beckford: "A gentleman might make the best huntsman. I have no doubt that he would, if he chose the trouble of it." It is just the "trouble" that chokes people off half the projects and enterprises of life. Gentlemen who hunt their own hounds should remember they are huntsmen. He is a public character, and as such is liable to be criticised by the field adversely, or not, in accordance with the day's sport. The generalship of a master consists in making the most of a country, and the greatest use of his friends—that is, exhort the members to put their shoulder to the wheel in the cause of fox-hunting. Diplomacy (a genteel term for "humbugging") is another requisite for an M.F.H.

I regret that this chapter must be somewhat curtailed. I quote, however, the words of a Lord Petre to Mr. Delme Ratcliffe, who was then taking over the Hertfordshire: "Remember, however," added his lordship, after going through a recapitulation of the hundreds, "you will never have your hand out of your pocket, and must always have a guinea in it." Most readers of these pages know what a master can reasonably expect from his field, and what the field expects from the master. "A country should be hunted, the good and the bad alternately, to give general satisfaction, and in the long run better sport will be

enjoyed." Beckford makes some distinction between managing a pack of hounds and hunting them.

Various are the opinions as to the best man to fill the position of M.F.H. The great question hinges on the style of man himself. We all know the ease and readiness with which people find fault. It may be of interest to quote "Gentleman" Smith's—a former M.F.H. of the Pytchley and Craven Hunts—ideas of a perfect huntsman. "He should possess health, memory, decision, temper, and patience, voice and sight, courage and spirits, perseverance, activity; and with these he will soon make a bad pack a good one. If quick, he will make a slow pack quick; if slow, he will make a quick pack slow." Mr. Smith continues, "But first, to become a good one he must have a fair chance, and should not be interfered with by any one after leaving the meet. Granted he is in the master's confidence. . . . He should be able to think for himself when hounds check." Beckford's qualifications are to be summed up in the single word "youth." Doubtless perpetual evergreenness is a most desirable attribute. The old head on young shoulders is probably the one attribute referred to.

A man may certainly be born to become a huntsman. We have heard Mr. C. M'Neill

spoken of as a "born huntsman." There are very many families of huntsmen indeed. The following is Beckford's ideal: "He should be young, strong, bold, and enterprising; fond of the diversion, and indefatigable in the pursuit of it; he should be sensible and good-tempered, and sober; exact, civil; naturally a good horseman, his voice should be strong and clear, have an eye so quick as to perceive which of the hounds carries the scent, when all are running; and should distinguish the foremost hounds when he does not see them. He should be quiet, patient, and without conceit he should not be too fond of displaying these attributes, till necessity calls them forth. He should let his hounds alone, whilst they can hunt, and he should have the genius to assist them when they cannot." Many professional huntsmen, however, have combated with age and weight. I quote these qualifications as many masters hunt their own hounds.

The idea of this work is not one of laying down the law, but has been compiled as a work of useful reference merely. The scope of this work does not admit of the M.F.H.'s deportment at the meet, the rôles of huntsmen, whippers-in, and second horsemen to be discussed therein.

The following rules were found in the Diary of W. Summers, huntsman to Mr. Napper in the

forties. He was kennel huntsman to the late Mr. W. C. Standish during that gentleman's mastership of the Hursley and the New Forest foxhounds. I quote them here in the interest of all concerned.

"No man should attempt to hunt a pack of foxhounds who has not a cool head, and particularly a good temper. An excitable temperament is not an acquisition; its possessor may ride as hard as he likes; he will never make a good huntsman —but that never catches foxes. Most huntsmen, to our idea [Summers says], ride too hard; nineteen out of twenty override their own hounds, and drive them hundreds of yards over the scent, leading the field after them; for very few of the sportsmen who attend the meets ever look at the hounds: they ride at the huntsman, not to the hounds. A huntsman will tell you that it is not his fault that he overrides his hounds, but 'the gentlemen do press on me so.'

"A cool-headed huntsman with nerve will not allow himself to be hurried, and will see when his leading hounds have the scent and when they have not. He will take no notice of any man, and hunt hounds as though he, and he alone, were present, and consequently give satisfaction to the few that know anything about it (hunting) and catch his fox. He need take no heed of holloas or ask advice when hunting his hounds, but should have his own

opinion, and stick to it. He will let his hounds alone as much as possible : they will know more than he does about making their own cast first ; and should they fail to recover the scent, then let him try what he can do ; he should remember foxes seldom wait, and he should make up his mind quickly what he means to do. The worse the scent, the quieter he will be with his hounds ; full well he knows that if he once gets their heads up, it will take him all his time to get them down again. He must have his eyes everywhere, and so he will quickly detect what has probably headed the fox—a man ploughing, a flock of sheep, or a herd of bullocks."

Hounds are often overridden by an impatient or unsportsman-like field of horsemen, or galloped to holloas by an ignorant huntsman.

"How often have we seen a fox, who, to all appearance, was as good as killed, unaccountably lost owing to impatience. Either the huntsman has viewed the fox away, or the shepherd has who is holloaing him ; thus he begins to blow his horn and cheers on his hounds at best pace. Unluckily their heads go up, and the fox is lost. He can't make out why, neither can half the field, who don't care much, and ride home satisfied they have had a gallop and a jump, and think the fox a good one ; in fact, they are glad he is spared for another day. But the sporting M.F.H. knows

why that fox was lost, and wishes there had been a potato in his huntsman's mouth when he viewed him. Had the hounds been left alone, he knows that fox's hours were numbered, whereas the hounds are rather disgusted at the day's toil. A general, however brave a man he may be, if he has no head, is useless in command of an army; and the brainless huntsman, gallant rider though he may be, can never command hounds. Riding propensities of hunt servants are over-estimated, and knowledge of hunting science is not taken into account by the field. Those who hunt to ride merely estimate the huntsman by the number of his falls and useless jumping of fences. Then an ignorance of fox-hunting is displayed."

Summers pertinently goes on to say, "Servants are sent out hunting to assist the hounds, and not ride to the gentlemen, but follow the pack the nearest and quickest way, and not jump fences because Captain 'Bellairs' does so; that gallant man of war may stop his horse and break his neck, too, but the huntsman and whips are required for the day; they should nurse their horses for the afternoon run. They are no use lying in bed with broken limbs; but in the field is their place, where they ought to be of use, and are paid to be so, and assist in promoting the most liberal and noblest of sports."

Captain W. C. Standish, M.F.H., contributed Summers' Diary to *Baily's Magazine.*

"To take a lesson from his book,
And at his system fairly look,
Would Quorndon's hero only deign,
He would not hunt his fox in vain.
But no ; with him it's all the pace :
The hounds will look him in the face,
And seem to say, 'Our noble master,
You would not have us go much faster ;
For we, on flying so intent,
A mile behind have left the scent.'
Indeed, good sir, you'll shortly find,
And ever after bear in mind,
That if you wish your hounds to shine,
Keep only those who hold the line."

Ode to ASSHETON SMITH, 1813.

CHAPTER V

THE COST OF HUNTING

"O'er the bottle at eve, of our pleasure we'll tell,
For no pastime on earth can fox-hunting excel;
It brightens our thoughts for philosophy's page,
Gives strength to our youth, and new vigour to age."

THE estimate under this category outside the master's own establishment is in all cases difficult to assess. Again, the master's knowledge and eagle eye over all kennels and stables practically rules the expenditure. A master can make little or no profit on his original outlay when he takes a hunting country. This may vary from £1500 to £2000; in a small provincial country (and one or two in Ireland) £1000 might suffice. I refer principally to harriers. The horses "run away" with a good deal of money. Here, too, a disinterested expert will render yeoman service on the spot to a new master; for the quality of the mounts of hunt servants varies with the nature of the country, and a well-mounted hunt servant takes more care of his horse than a badly mounted man. Few dealers, even if they hunt, will assist a master to mount his men at any reduction of cost. Spring is the best time of year to buy horses; bargains

may be had then to suit all pockets. They prove a good investment (the summering included). Each horse having a box in a long range of shedding that opens on to an exercising yard, two feeds a day are required—rye, lucerne, and vetches being also supplied. Here turning out in grass fields I again discount. The cost of keep works out at about 12s. per week in summer and 20s. in the hunting season.

The cost of hounds is roughly £750 to £1400 a pack. Annual drafts are, however, usually procured; they vary in price according to the position of the pack they are purchased from. The Cottesmore, Belvoir, and Warwickshire naturally are expensive hounds to buy drafts from. About three guineas to five guineas per couple is the average price, or, singly, two guineas each. For three days a week country fifty couples suffice. Their food ("meal" a year or more old) costs £14 to £18 per ton. The above pack requires about twenty tons per year; one hound about four cwt. in that time. Horse or cow flesh costs about £5 per month—six or eight carcases. As to the pack, the dogs and bitches are generally (but not always) divided into separate packs. The huntsman feeds the hounds; but when he is out hunting, the feeder does it.

The whippers-in and feeders divide their other duties. Good strappers are rather difficult to procure. The wages of the hunting staff are as follows:

huntsman, £100 to £120 per annum; the first or second whipper-in receive £80 and £60 respectively; each second horseman £1 a week. In each case house and firing free. Their clothing averages £20 to £30 apiece. Prices of kennel and stable necessaries now rather favour the buyer. Oatmeal, oats, and hay are to be had at a reasonable figure. Straw is dear. In some large stables peat-moss and sawdust are substituted. Straw, however, pays for buying in stables and kennels. Straw averages £2 per ton, hay £3 per ton, and oats £1, 1s. per quarter.

In some countries the master's duties have been lightened latterly; he has not now to investigate all compensations for damage. In others, the poultry and wire funds are now presided over by their own secretaries, under the master's advice; no hard and fast rule can be laid down on this head, however. A general estimate of a pack in the early days of hunting was as follows: to hunt a country twice a week, £1170 per season—eight horses, groom, helpers, food for twenty-five couples of hounds, whipper-in, feeder, firing, taxes, saddlery, blacksmith, &c. Then for £1625 three days a week, twelve horses, groom, helpers, food for forty couples, two whippers-in, and for £1935 four days. These calculations do not allow of a paid huntsman, as £300 extra would be required. Mr. Delme Radcliffe in the thirties estimates three

days a week in Herts at £2000. Squire Draper, we read, however, kept a good pack on £700 a year!

Other hunting authorities advise hunting and farming to be combined. They could then produce lucerne, hay, oats, and straw, &c. The Earl of Coventry considers about £500 a year for every hunting day to be the round sum required, in his estimation. I herewith add a brief summary of the funds that are required to compensate farmers. They put in claims on account of many damages. Please note, it is the peripatetic hunting-man that does this. Now that capping has been resorted to in some fashionable countries and subscriptions raised, the numbers of those that hunt and do not pay have been thinned. Then there is the wire fund required to mend fences. The taking down and putting up again of wire fences is undertaken by this fund, or some of the best countries would be unrideable. These countries are Northampton, Rutland, Huntingdon, and Leicestershire; there is little or no wire in other countries. Here, however, red danger-posts mark its position. In the provinces there is no wire fund; in Berks it is £10; in some countries many hundreds would not cover it. To manage the poultry fund, a country is divided into districts and the claims therein settled by gentlemen of the hunt. The altered condition of the farmer's position and means nowadays entails the compensation for various other damages

not mentioned above. A hunting farmer does not claim such compensation. Further damages will occur to those who read these lines. Strangers should have consideration for all farmers, and endeavour to buy forage from them. They should remember that farmers are struggling to live.

Under the next category comes the expense to the individual. It is not expensive, considering the health and pleasure it affords. Three days a fortnight in a fair country would cost about £80 for the season for one horseman, provided he did not break down. The initial outlay in horse-flesh, &c., would be £140. The above would include the hunt subscription; by riding a screw, sport might be enjoyed for less. The £80 expenditure would be expended as follows :—

Keep of hunter at livery for 36 weeks at 29s per week, and groom . . .	£52	4	0
Keep of hunter during summer (turned out to grass at 6s per week), 16 weeks	4	16	0
Shoeing and veterinary (£3 each) . .	6	0	0
Hunt subs. (less fashionable country, £5)	10	0	0
Extras : such as tips to hunt servants, &c. ; keep, saddlery, horse and personal (hunting) clothing in repair . .	7	0	0
	£80	0	0

As to horses, the following table gives roughly the minimum reasonable price for five or six-

year-olds, well bred (sound), and with good manners :—

	Provinces.	The Shires.
Light weight . .	£60	£80
Middle „ . . .	120	150
Heavy „ . . .	170	up to any figure.

Younger horses would be cheaper—short days and near meets are the order then. £50 to £120 appears to be a sum that will mount the average hunting-man. A horse that hunts three days a fortnight should last six to eight seasons. I will briefly summarise the probable expenses under the following heading : wages, saddlery and stable accessories, hunters at livery, shoeing, veterinary (say £2 per annum), clothes, and hunt subs. A groom's wages differ in different districts from £1 to £1, 5s. per week. A headman, with helper under him, expects from £1, 5s. to £1, 15s. per week, clothes, and a cottage. Strappers usually receive about £1, 1s. weekly ; useful boys from 10s. to 18s. a week. The different articles of saddlery and accessories vary with the saddler. Second-hand exercising saddles will be found an economy.

Those who keep hunters at livery will have to pay from £1, 4s. to £1, 10s. per week for each animal. A set of shoes, lasting a month, cost from 3s. 6d. to 5s. Hunting clothes are entirely fixed by taste ; almost every article of apparel, breeches, boots, &c., must be duplicated. A good style of outfit would

cost from £12, 10s. to £25 complete. For a list of hunt subscriptions I refer you to Baily's "Hunting Directory" (Vinton & Co.): £5 in a provincial country, and £10 to £20 for a two or three day a week man in the Midlands, to £40 per season for the Quorn will all be found categorically dealt with there.

CHAPTER VI

THE HORSE AND THE COUNTRY TO SELECT

" The horses snort to be at the sport ;
The dogges are running free ;
The wooddes rejoice at the merry noise
Of ticy, tantara-tee-tee.

—GRAY (*ætat Henry VIII.*).

A LOVER of horses would probably endeavour to possess a stud of one size and stamp; this is difficult to attain, even when money is no object. However, a sound horse and a good performer at a moderate figure will suit the many. Bad shoulders and too great length of leg are to be avoided—a trial ride being in most cases needed. A high wither may to the Tyro be confused with a good shoulder; it is well known that a bad-shouldered horse cannot move well over ridge and furrow. In fact, a straight-shouldered horse is an abomination for a hunter: he cannot jump except at the expense of his fore-legs, nor can he recover himself when he has made a mistake. For buyers who have not had many years' experience, a veterinary surgeon's advice when making a purchase is a *sine quâ non.* There are numbers of connoisseurs, however, who are

also very glad of their services. A horse that has done much work can hardly ever, if ever, be theoretically sound. And it is often found that a faultlessly shaped hunter may, from want of courage or a sulky temper, prove inferior to an ugly-looking animal. They run good in all shapes and sizes, and an intending purchaser of a hunter, if he has time to school him, cannot do better than buy at an Irish fair, accompanied by a veterinary surgeon. He will be sure of having something that can jump, and a saleable commodity when he is tired of him. Blood will tell, and combines quality and endurance. Stonehenge says: "It is admitted on the turf that high breeding is of more consequence than external shape. A horse of perfect shape and inferior strain of blood will be beaten by one of a high-class running strain but not so well made." No horses are merely machines, but animals full of whims and humours: these a good groom will understand—the better bred, the more nervous they are.

The number of horses and their size (which latter varies with their riders) are two points that have now to be considered. The be all and end all of a young sportsman is to get a thoroughly made hunter to start with: it engenders confidence. Screws do not pay to buy. Poor men require every horse to work, except a young one who cannot be given a long day.

Stabling, forage, and grooming cost the same for any horse. These should be bought at the end of a season if possible. Light weight and all hunters are cheaper then, and they can be conditioned by next cubbing season. As to condition, it takes some weeks to put it on—long, steady, and slow; walking and trotting daily exercise is needed—say, from the end of July in early mornings, to allow your horse going to the meet in September "nearly" fit. The requisite physic should, of course, be administered previously. And all this, so that a "good thing" may be enjoyed early in the season.

The number of horses required varies with the country: a single mount for the provincial hunt to the six or eight in the shires. Here and in the Midlands you can hunt four days a week with six horses, two being required out each day, there being generally a good run in the afternoons. The above number would allow for the casualty list. In the Midlands the hunt servants are allowed two horses per diem; and an open season free from frosts is not the most expensive in horse-flesh. Size of horses requisite to a hunting-man is computed by his weight and length of leg: thus, a man 5 feet 10 inches (weight, say, 12 to 13 stone) requires a 15.3 to 16 hands horse. Small horses are best if you can ride them; they are handier, hardier, and

stand a long day better. On the other hand, big horses go easier in "dirt," tire less in jumping, and can brush through a fence. Professional thrusters nearly all ride big horses.

Now it is a generally accepted fact that a good Leicestershire or Midland hunter will carry you in almost any country unless it is an exceptionally rough one. Then for a fourteen-stone man a short-legged thoroughbred hunter is required. Then for the rich man a stud all of a size and stamp is generally *au fait;* it is, however, a task of time as well as an expensive business to collect such a stud. In choosing a hunter, bad shoulders (viz. straight), and a too great length of leg should be eschewed. A leggy horse is to be avoided. Here Captain Haye's "Points of the Horse" and Captain Cortlandt G. Mackenzie's (the late) "Notes for Hunting Men" should be read. A veterinary surgeon's advice is generally needed wherever your would-be hunter is purchased.

A really good hunter may not always be a perfectly made horse; his feet may not always be the same size, *e.g.*, and so on. Stonehenge says: "It is admitted on the turf that high breeding is of more consequence than external shape, and of two horses, one perfect in shape, and of an inferior strain; and the other of the most winning blood, but not so well made, the latter will be the most

likely to perform to his owner's satisfaction on the racecourse. A blood hunter is a suitable conveyance for some men. The following are a few words which go to prove that in the aggregate, despite the many changes all round, hunting expenses have not increased to-day to what they were in 1805. "Nimrod" (Mr. C. W. Apperley, the chief hunting collaborateur of that day) says: "Ten horses and a hack at Melton for twenty-five weeks cost £615, 10s., or about £2, 10s. per horse, and his allowance for fourteen horses one year at £1200 apparently includes summering the animals." On the other side of the question, however, subscriptions have now more than doubled; there was no wire fund then, and the poultry and other funds were not so large.

Now as to the country in which to hunt, men with sound ideas on the subject generally tell you, "every one should hunt from home if possible." Assuming that the would-be fox-hunter is free and independent, I refer him to the following lists. There are grass countries and provincial or woodland countries. The late Major G. J. Whyte-Melville tells us, "all countries are good in their way—some have collars, all have sport." The following works, however, give a full synopsis of most of the best known fox-hunting countries: Baily's "Annual Hunting Directory," 5s. (Vinton and Co.); "Hunting," the Badminton Library

(Longmans), by the late Duke of Beaufort, M. T. Morris, and Earl of Suffolk; "Hunting in Leicestershire," T. F. Dale; "A Century of English Fox-hunting," by an old friend, the late G. F. Underhill. Any of the best countries, and a few seasons in the Emerald Isle with its grass, banks, stone walls, &c., go to complete the education of a fox-hunter. The better horses a man has, the better he will be carried in any country, and it is generally accepted that the provincial countries are cheaper than the Midlands and shires to hunt in. As to riding to hounds, you require two horses per day in the grass countries where hounds run fast. Allowing for one horse in six being on the sick list, and the others require, say, five days' rest after a hard day in the shires, ten or twelve horses are required in Leicestershire for, say, three days a week. Nimrod holds this to be an accepted fact. An advantage in the less fashionable or provincial countries is that the comparative smallness of the fields enables the young sportsman to see more of the hunting than in the Midlands with their big crowds. Should the neophyte be superbly mounted, he might, in the latter case, override the hounds, which is not an enviable position to find oneself in.

I will now briefly note a few of the most important advantages derived from hunting in the shires. You get more value for your money, for it must

be a very bad scenting day in a grass country that you do not get at least one or two sharp fifteen minutes' spins; and there is more sport in the day to be had. There is no sport giving the same amount of pleasure, for which you pay at a like scale as hunting. Those that do hunt in the shires are, or should be, prepared to pay liberally, and in remaining countries according to scale. A horse costs, roughly, taking into consideration wages, forage, &c., £100 per annum. Nowadays the number of horses in a stud has to be kept down so that hunt subscriptions to various packs, &c., can be paid by those living in a busy hunting centre.

The day is not far distant when sporting rights in certain districts may have to be obtained and paid for. Take an ordinary week in the season and glance down the list of fixtures in some of the leading countries. First of all you have the Badminton at Tolldown. This means Sudbury Vale, a delightful part in this varied county—walls and fences here abound. Notley Abbey, near Oxford, with the Bicester, is in the best of that famous country. The Cottesmore at Somerby connects one's mind with sharp bursts to Ranksboro Gorse. Cranœ with Mr. Fernie's is always a well-favoured meet; it means Langton Caldwell and Stanton Wood. A Friday with the Quorn at Ashby Folville is not to be missed—coverts small, grass fields,

plenty of foxes, and practicable fences afford pleasure to all the field. This is an A1 country for a man without an eye to a country: here ignorance of your whereabouts is bliss. No less attractive is the Belvoir fixture at Folkingham; there are famous coverts here, stout foxes, and wide fields. Here you get plenty of galloping if there be a scent at all; here you see that grand pack, the Belvoir, to its best advantage. One more fine hunt and fixture can be visited on a Friday—the Warwickshire, at Wroxton Abbey, to boot. This is on the Banbury side of the country. Good scent here is rather the rule than the exception. Notes on these favourite meets can be prolonged *ad infin.* I must refer you to the *Field* any Saturday during the season, with some kind friend who can recount you days after hounds with this pack or that, the shires alone being referred to above.

"Every species of fence, every horse, doesn't suit,
What's a good country hunter may elsewhere prove a brute."

CHAPTER VII

HUNTERS AND THEIR STABLES

"Oh! the vigour with which the air is rife,
The spirit of joyous motion,
The fervour, the fulness of animal life,
Can be drained from no earthly potion.

Then the leap, the rise from the springy turf,
The rush through the buoyant air,
And the light shock landing—the veriest serf
Is our emperor then and there."

To write up the whole subject that comes under this heading would be too long a task for a handbook of this sort. Many further details not commented upon here will be found in "Hunting" (Badminton series); the late Duke of Beaufort, "Horses and Stables"; the late General Sir F. Fitzwygram; the late Captain C. G. Mackenzie's "Notes for Hunting Men"; the late Captain Haye's "Stable Management, &c.," and there are others. The subject can be approached from many points of view. Our health (we believe) is best when we live regularly, thus most people agree that the secret of successful stable management is "regularity." To obtain regularity in feeding, exercise and grooming is half the battle. The general order of events in a well-managed hunting

stable is assumed to be : at 6.30 A.M., water ; sweep out box or stall, and remove soiled litter ; remove night clothing, and hang out if fine ; clean horse's body, legs, head, mane, and tail ; sponge his dock and nostrils ; then put on fresh day clothing. About an hour after, feed horses, and the groom proceeds to breakfast. After that, say 9 A.M., saddle and bridle ; doors and windows to be opened before going out. While out, clothing to be brushed, horse groomed thoroughly on return, and bedded down. At 12 o'clock, water and feed, and attend to stable generally. 5 P.M., feed and water ; remove dung, and groom well, and night clothing put on, say, at 5 P.M., in winter 9 P.M. Stud or head groom visits stables and feed if necessary. Linseed mash is given twice a week (unless horse is hunting next day). Never feed without chaff, or feed within an hour before horse is watered. Do not give any food within an hour before horse going out hunting. On coming in, do not remove saddle or numnah until the back can be dried, which will be in about twenty minutes. This applies to girths of side saddle ; a leather numnah will be found to be as good as any. After a horse returns, wet bandages should be applied and kept on till grooming is finished. A horse's shoes should be continually looked over, and the inner under edge should never be sharp.

The following is somewhat the order of pro-

cedure on a hunting day. On the morning of hunting, give half bucket of water and feeds of corn as early as possible—this to be completed an hour before starting. On returning from hounds, throw on clothing and give gruel; rub horse's ears if exhausted. After stabling, give chilled water and hay; brush dirt off legs; wash feet; bandage loosely; dry neck, head, and shoulders; throw rug on, and give mash. Then finish the horse off; put on night clothing; dry legs, and put on dry bandages, and feed with dry corn. At night give another feed of corn, and see that his ears are dry and warm. Gruel for horses returning from hunting to be made about 12 o'clock—a quart of oatmeal with boiling water poured on it. The bucket to be covered up and left before fire till horse comes in. Mashes may be made as directed above: cold water is to be poured on oatmeal and given to a horse chilled.

The following are some of the main points of stable management condensed. Early exercise before breakfast is wrong in the winter months—liable to cause accidents and to be cut short owing to grooms being in a hurry to return to breakfast, thus horses would not be groomed on return; the pores of their skin being open, grooming is then beneficial. Litter should be placed outside during the mornings; floors of stalls and boxes are thus disinfected. Litter sheds are also a

necessary adjunct where they can be had for wet weather.

Horse clothing to be healthy should be well brushed and aired daily; the same rug is not to be next the horse's skin night and day. The use of rugs for hunters' exercise cannot be laid down by rule; this exercise is better when taken after breakfast. Smoking and stopping at public-houses during exercise is to be prohibited.

The use of the wisp at evening stable hour is not only to make a horse's coat shine, but to brace his muscles up and give them tone; it also aids to condition. Only horses with bad feet are likely to cast shoes out hunting: of course their shoes should be looked to regularly. The inner under edge of hind shoes to be rounded: this prevents overreaches—these, it need hardly be said, occur in heavy ground at jumps. This should be impressed on shoeing-smiths when placing shoes on hunters behind. Ten to twelve ounces is the requisite weight for any hunter's shoe. At 4s. a set they should last three weeks to a month: they may then be removed, refitted or replaced. Some horses find out when they are to hunt and will not feed in consequence, and the stable routine should not be altered in their case. It is advantageous to give a horse gruel before or on returning home after a hard day; a mouthful of hay may also be given. Here, and on returning

home, the master or his stud-groom must see that the horse is properly looked after. Rubbing a horse's ears refreshes him as much as anything. After sufficient grooming a horse should be dry and warm; a linseed mash and crushed corn is often advisable before the stud-groom finally looks round and turns in himself. In the case of knocks, strains, or bruises, their immediate attention will save them becoming serious.

CHAPTER VIII

FEEDING AND CONDITIONING OF HUNTERS, AND SOME REMARKS ON SADDLERY

"Here lies the tall squire of Enderley Hall,
With his bridles, boots, fiddle, brush, colours and all.
Some liked his scraping, though none of the best,
And all liked the welcome he gave to his guest.
His taste was, in horses and hounds orthodox,
And no man can say he e'er headed the fox,
In the dog days or frost, when the kennel was mute;
Each turns with the turn of his humour to suit."

—*Ode to* MR. LORRAINE: BETHEL COX, 1810.

A HARD and fast rule cannot be laid down for all horses' food. Nervous, delicate feeders are the opposite of gross feeders; both species require care and attention. A good stableman can with care make a poor or shy feeder keep in good condition; they are often fed late at night. A horse that has been out at work is usually fed then. Experts consider that a horse's stomach is emptied in four hours. About four feeds a day and three pounds of corn per feed are generally sufficient. Hunters are to be fed as regularly as possible, so far as their work allows. The following times would probably be convenient: after morning and mid-day stables, at three o'clock, after evening stables—if necessary, the last thing at night. This

last feed at night necessary in some cases will be resented by many stud-grooms. I will estimate the average food per diem as follows: oats, 14 lbs.; hay, 10 lbs.; and straw for litter, about 10 lbs. per diem.

There are numerous works on sale which lay down the quality of forage. They may be theoretically applied, but an expert will show you good stuff from bad. A farmer or good local dealer are the best purveyors to a hunting-man. Foreign stuff I do not advise. Old oats, large, hard and clean are the best; they can with advantage be laid in store in the spring. Then a well-ventilated store-house is required, and the oats should be turned over monthly. Generally horses digest crushed oats best. Hay is not so easily diagnosed as to quality; the best is generally "well made" and cut at the right time. Good hay always looks and smells well; its stalks should not be soft and flabby. A stack can be best judged when it has been cut up and trussed. As to ingredients, beans and peas are useful and an important article in a hunting stable; they are to be used with great caution in the case of young horses as they are heating as food. When a horse is doing hard work, two or three pounds a day is quite enough. Probably the best "chaff" (which should be given in every feed of corn, as it makes a horse masticate and digest his corn better), is of clover and rye-grass hay when obtainable.

It is not wise to place a superfluity of food before a horse; in fact, corn left in mangers an hour after feeding should be removed. As stated above, a nervous or excitable horse feeds best at night; either carrots, flour, or sugar have to be added in some cases for timid feeders. Rock salt may be, with convenience, kept in a horse's manger. Care must be taken that hay is not given in too large quantities, as great waste easily occurs. As stimulating and heating food is necessary to all hunters at hard work, mashes twice a week are useful to keep the system in order. All physic is to be dispensed with as far as possible. They appear, however, to be most necessary on a horse being brought up from grass, and in some cases when a horse is going "out" to grass for, say, two and a half months' summer run. Again, as to straw, its price varies in grass and plough counties. Of this the weekly market returns furnish a reliable price-list. Litter should be turned out in the mornings, and soiled portions taken to the dung-pit. Two trusses should suffice for two boxes per week; wheat straw is best, being bright and not brittle. Barley straw is dusty and irritating, and oat straw some horses eat too readily. Above include the main points to be kept in view as to a horse's diet.

Now as to the summering and conditioning of hunters. It goes without saying that good hunters

sell best at the season's commencement—even then it is not advisable to part with a horse you really like. Manifold reasons may tempt a man to sell. And again it is only a really finished horseman who can go well on new mounts at a season's commencement. These are therefore some of the courses open to a would-be fox-hunter for the next season. You can keep the horses up in gentle exercise, or summer them in loose boxes, or turn them out to grass. Now turning out to grass has not even economy on its side. For a full diagnosis of this plan I refer you to "Hunting" in the Badminton Library among other works.

Lameness during the next season you will probably find, besides accidents during the summer in wire and from kicks, &c. To crown all, there is the inevitable loss of condition and the months it takes to regain it. As to summering in loose boxes or strawyards, it is fairly cheap : the horses get no exercise to speak of. Risk is, however, minimised. No doubt the system of keeping horses up in gentle exercise pays best in the long run. A rest from high feeding as well as the hard work is desirable. Horses require cooling down as well, viz. gradually place horses on laxative food. Those that are blistered after season's work to run in a paddock; the others, presumably sound, go to walking exercise. Horses summered at grass re-

quire tips in front, otherwise their feet must be seen to once a month. Another advantage in having a shady paddock near your stable, is to be able to let horses have a run in the cool of the morning and the evening. If the night is hot, let them remain out. Beware of too much galloping and probable kicking; for the horse who remains in the stable all the summer, vetches and fresh-cut grass are healthy. Then no physic would be necessary. Oats and hay can be given in certain quantities, according to the amount of work to each horse.

Conditioning for the winter usually commences in the middle of August. About this date commence with one and a half hour, the corn to be increased to 10 pounds per diem, about half the hay (say, 12 pounds) to be cut into chaff after September 1. The exercise to be gradually increased to two and a half hours. There is to be a daily slow trot of two to three hours, and uphill if possible—this develops muscle. Corn to be gradually increased, and a handful of beans and peas added from the middle of September. If the horses are in good health, the daily exercise should be increased to three hours; the hunters can then be fed as in the hunting season. A gross or too fat horse to be sweated by trotting in clothing. Prior to November 1 little or no galloping is required (by grooms); a few gallops cubbing are best. Only very excep-

tionally hard ground in October will keep your horse back.

A racecourse (if permission is allowed), downs, common, or heath are best for conditioning horses, the exact spot to be changed about occasionally. There are various ideas *re* clipping ; in many cases this is not done until the coat is set. Oftentimes the coat is removed early and at regular intervals ; then there is less risk of chill. It is an open question whether the saddle-mark is to be clipped or not. If the hair is left under the saddle to prevent sore backs, care should be taken to dry this thoroughly each day after hunting. The clipping of legs varies in different countries, and is ruled by fashion. Hair left on legs is a great protective against thorns, and in limestone countries, including Ireland, it forms a preventive to mud fever.

As to hunting saddles and their concomitant parts, the makers in London and elsewhere are legion. It goes without saying a saddle to fit properly should have an equal bearing on the animal's back. A saddle may, of course, fit two or three horses. In the case of ladies' saddles, horses to carry ladies should be exercised in them during September and October. Of numnahs there are several varieties ; a leather one is best, and they should be kept soft by rubbing on saddle side with tallow. Ladies' saddles are often best with a felt or

sheep-skin numnah, and these should be larger than the saddle to prevent sore backs. Small saddles are an abomination for hunting or polo, and plain, flapped saddles are always the best. If saddles are placed on the ground too much, the leather is worn off round the edges, especially at the pommel.

Either man or woman should have a safety bar or patent hook to affix to his or her stirrup-leathers to minimise the chances of being dragged out hunting—a very dangerous experience. In this case also there are many safety bars; Champion and Wilton's patent hooks do not fly off before the necessity arises. They are simple and inexpensive. I need hardly say that saddles and all their accessories are of the very best from this Oxford Street firm. When using above hooks, the stirrup-leather must be put on with the tongue of the buckle inwards. Stirrup-leathers and girths should be daily looked to; some hunting-men have a thin strip sewn inside their leathers to strengthen them. Of girths, white are the smarter, but leather most serviceable and strongest. They require dubbing. Any and all of the works herein mentioned have concise chapters on bits, bitting, according to space at command. A large collection of fancy bits is an expense to collect; they don't avail much. A horse, to be a hunter at all, should go in a light or heavy double hunting bridle. The former is "ward" hunt or polo bridle. Then there is

the "Ben Morgan," the "Rensum," *et hoc genus omne.* Many hard pullers frustrate these in the end. Except in Ireland and in bank countries, do not hunt in snaffle bridles : you cannot collect a horse as he approaches his fences in these bridles. To teach a young horse to hunt in a double bridle requires good hands and patience ; of course it is jumping "fly" fences and taking off wrong that sends horses sprawling. A horse that star-gazes would be quite safe in a "running" martingale ; the majority of hunting-men, I believe, consider a "standing" martingale dangerous. The martingale rings should be on the bridoon reins, in a case where horses will not allow of them being placed on the bit reins ; and they are dangerous on the bit should a horse fall on landing, or get "hung up" jumping. Curb-chains should never be tight, the cheek of the bit to be in "line" with cheek-piece of the bridle. There should be room for your finger between the curb-chain and the jaw. You can have either a leather curb or leather chain-guard.

CHAPTER IX

HUNTING CENTRES

"The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
And it is well-nigh day;
And Harry, our king, is gone hunting,
To bring his deer to bay."

—GRAY (*ætat. Henry VIII.*).

FOR the interest of would-be fox-hunters and others, I now enumerate a few of the best hunting centres in Great Britain. Ireland, for instance, possesses greater attractions to some, in that in an average year there is more open weather there, more especially in the south and west. Fogs are not unknown in Ireland and are dreaded there as much as frost. As to the banks, you can get accustomed to them in the same way that you do the various fences in England. There is not much to choose between the winter climate of Ireland and Devonshire. From the point of view of continuous sport, say for nine months in the year, the corners of South-west Somerset and North-east Devon are the best. The Devon and Somerset staghounds, foxhounds, and harriers hunt the same ground. The country has its own charm, not governed by the number of fences

jumped. There is a higher average of good runs and days with stag than fox; here the riding is rough and most of the galloping done over heather. In September and October the district overflows with visitors. By the end of October the quarry changes from stag to hind: rain that brings heavy going, this and mist are the two chief deterrents to sport here. Of quarters there is a wide choice, and Exford is the most central. From here the Exmoor and Dulverton foxhounds can be reached; also the Devon and Somerset staghounds. Exford, however, is dull for a long winter stay when Minehead, Dunster, and Porlock are livelier.

Porlock is handy for a good deal of hunting with the Exmoor foxhounds, Minehead harriers, and the staghounds, while Minehead and Dunster are also handy for the West Somerset foxhounds. From Porlock and Minehead you can hunt for nine months out of the twelve—one of the ideal spots this for a hunting correspondent. The Blackmore Vale, however, is a very popular pack, I need hardly add; then comes the Cattistock from Sherborne and Yeovil, the Taunton Vale from Yeovil, the South and West Wilts from Templecombe, and Lord Portman's from Shaftesbury. Houses let well in the Blackmore Vale country; some winter residents at Torquay favour the South Devon; eastward of this all the packs attract residents alone, no visitors.

Now as to the hunting Londoners, they nearly all hunt from their homes, within the forty-mile radius. They form the backbone of a dozen or more subscription packs. There are but few hunting specials from London termini patronised to any extent nowadays; men do not wish to undertake the strain on nerves and constitutions. In the Midlands there are a few places that attract strangers (outside the shires and Warwickshire). Cheltenham, of course, attracts many, as five packs are within reach; it is a bright, cheery place; you can hunt from Cheltenham every day in the week. The Vale of White Horse attracts visitors, and the new hotel quite close to the gates of Badminton takes a contingent. Naturally, houses let well for the winter in the district. Then Grantham can command the east side of the Blankney; and there is a certain influx of visitors all up the Great Northern line. To cite a few, Catterick Bridge, Croft Spa, Harrogate, and Darlington are all fine centres. From Croft and Darlington you can get Lord Zetland's, the Harworth, and South Durham. There are no hunting visitors to the Tynedale and Morpeth, for instance, and there are very many provincial packs under this category.

Other convenient hunting centres, from whence two or more packs of hounds may be reached, are as under. Taking the shires first, from Melton you get the Belvoir, Cottesmore, and Quorn; from

Market Harborough, Mr. Fernie's, Pytchley, and Woodland Pytchley; Stamford, Cottesmore, and Fitzwilliam; Leicester, Atherstone, Mr. Fernie's, and Quorn; Oakham, as fashionable as Melton, the Cottesmore, and Quorn; then the other towns (understudies, as it were, of Melton), Rugby very convenient to the Atherstone, Pytchley, Warwickshire, and North Warwickshire; York; Bramham Moor, Holderness, Lord Middleton's, York, and Anisty. He must be hard to please whom one of these does not satisfy; or, say, Cheltenham; Berkeley, Cotswold, North Cotswold, Croome, and Ledbury. Kettering; Pytchley, and Pytchley Woodland. Leamington, Warwickshire and North Warwickshire; Aylesbury; the O.B.H. (west); South Oxfordshire, Whaddon Chase, and Lord Rothschild's staghounds. Harrogate; Bramham Moor, York, and Anisty; and of sea-side resorts, Scarborough; Goathland, Sir Everard Cayley's, Lord Middleton's, and Stainton Dale. Eastbourne has two packs—South Down and East Sussex; Bideford one—Hon. Mark Rolle's. Then I pass on to such centres on the G.W.R., not so far from Paddington, as Swindon, the Duke of Beaufort's, Craven, V.W.H. (Cricklade); V.W.H. (Cirencester); and Cirencester; Duke of Beaufort's, Cotswold, and V.W.H. (Cirencester), and V.W.H. (Cricklade); other convenient country centres are, Chelmsford; four Essex packs; Banbury; Bicester,

Grafton, Heythrop, and Warwickshire; Buckingham; Bicester, and Warden Hill, Grafton, and Whaddon Chase. Haslemere; Chiddingfold, H.H., and Lord Leconfield's. Stow-in-the-Wold; Heythrop, and Warwickshire. Reigate; Burstow, Old Surrey, and Surrey Union. Crewe; North and South Cheshire, and North Staffordshire. Derby; Earl of Harrington's, and Meynell. Doncaster; Badsworth, Lord Fitzwilliam's, and Viscount Galway's. Oxford; Old Berkshire, Bicester, and Warden Hill, Heythrop, and South Oxfordshire, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, and Newmarket, and Thurlow. Baily's "Hunting Directory" (Vinton and Co.) gives a detailed list of hunting centres in England, Ireland, and Scotland, and hunts accessible from them. A smaller and very handy work is "The Hunting Annual," by Walter M. May and Arthur W. Coaten, lately enlarged: Messrs. Love & Malcolmson, 4 and 5 Dean Street, W.C. Price 1s.

CHAPTER X

SOME AXIOMS AND SAYINGS OF THE CHASE

"And you, proud duke, all dressed in blue,
A word or two I have for you:
Your field's too wild; your huntsman slack;
In no condition is your pack.
The proudest peer in all the land,
The science you don't understand;
Then why your thoughts on hunting fox?
You'd better stick to p—l—t—s."

—*Sporting Magazine*, 1820.

"THE careful man is quite as likely to meet with an accident as the careless;" "the best horses are bred, not in great studs, but on small private farms;" "Mr. T. C. Garth retired in 1902, after fifty years' mastership of his own hounds." Anthony Trollope wrote most of his novels and acquired most of his hunting knowledge in Essex. "Never give a horse violent exercise immediately after a full meal or a full draught of water." "Some men hunt to ride, some ride to hunt; others, thank Heaven! double their fun by doing both" (Brooksby, the *Field*). This from Nimrod's (Mr. C. J. Apperley) pen: "He did not suppose he had seen the huntsman of a foxhound pack, mounted on a thoroughbred, a dozen times in all his experience." "Should you

own a kicker or a runaway, shoot him rather than bring him into the hunting-field."

In the days of William III. the Charlton country (now Lord Leconfield's) in Sussex was one of the most fashionable. "A mare named Swiftlass, in 1880–1881, carried Will Dale, then huntsman of the Burton, over a drain 25 feet wide and 15 feet deep—measured." When Gillard became huntsman of the Belvoir in 1870, the first problem in breeding he had to solve was how to make a more musical pack; they were beautiful workers, but their tongues were not heard enough. The earliest pack to provide sport for the many was the common hunt of London, whose rights were confirmed by Henry I. (1100–1135). It has been calculated, "that in countries other than the shires it costs about £50 to catch a fox; in the shires it costs much more."

"Ware hounds!" Mr. Merthyr Guest once had to send home six hounds which had been lamed by thrusters. "Do not make a refusal by your horse, a personal affront to be punished by whip and spur." How few people take any real interest in hounds! If one wants to see brave men struggling against adversity, take nine men out of ten to spend an hour on the flags. Henry VIII. is said to have tired out eight horses in one day's stag-hunting! Mr. Nevill of Chilland, Hants, used to hunt water-

rats with his bloodhounds when he could hunt nothing else. Mr. Clarke, owner of the Hindon harriers, once saw a hare sit so close by that a hound trod on her, and she did not move then. Captain White, Master of the Cheshire, 1841–55, once played a trick on his hard-riding field by laying a ten-mile drag over the stiffest line he could select. "Only one farmer in twenty feels the direct benefit of hunting" (Mr. J. O. Paget). Mr. Childe of Kinlet, ancestor of Captain Childe-Pemberton (the late), is said to have set the fashion of fast cross-country riding about 1800; though in November 1777, the then Marquis of Granby recommended a horse as able to "leap well and safely."

"Hunting is a very effective method of forming and improving character;" a Mr. Westwood Chafy of Ongar had a hunter named "Free Trade," which carried him 404 days in thirteen seasons. The old style of hunting—finding the fox by working up the drag—is practised by the Fell packs of foxhounds to-day. Mr. J. Crozier, Master of the Blencathra, took office in 1839, and held it till 1903. Mr. R. W. Nesfield, late Master of the High Peak Harriers, killed his thousandth and last hare on April 2, 1892; his hunting diary described 1235 days. The great Duke of Wellington said: "Give me a fox-hunter, for he knows the lie of a country, and makes the best officer."

"Foxes are ten times more numerous now than they were fifty years age" ("Borderer," Sir R. Greene Price, Bart.).

Strapping is to a horse what massage is to his master. "May attention still be given to the master when he talks, and for the puppies may he find innumerable walks." When Lord Suffield took the Quorn in 1836 he paid 3000 guineas for Mr. Lambton's pack—"sixty-six couples of old, forty couples of young, hounds." Birch-Reyhardson, in "Sports and Anecdotes," tells of a half-bred hunter which was constantly jumped over a 7 foot 3 inch stone wall. To really enjoy hunting one must take much on trust; however, small hunters are handier and hardier than big ones, and they recover more quickly from the effects of an exhausting day. "When a fox is beat, he depends on his brains." "A keen master makes a loyal and obedient field." Major Fisher, in "Through Stable and Saddleroom," remarks "that a blind horse does not grow a proper summer coat." It is the element of danger that lends hunting one of its greatest charms: the Kilkenny hounds originally hunted wolves. Risks are minimised by the union of good horses and good riders, and falling is a science.

Members of Lord Fitzhardinge's and the Old Berkeley hunts wear yellow plush instead of scarlet. Mr. Pelham of Conud used to dress his hunt servants in white pipeclayed coats. "The way to rear

JOHN WINTER

Huntsman to the late Ralph Lambton, Esq., M.F.H. Durham, 1804-33

a foxhound puppy, is to give it freedom, keep it dry at night, and not overfeed it" (the Earl of Lonsdale). On November 30, 1855, the York and Ainsty had a run of seventeen miles in one hour and forty-five minutes. Raise your hat, not your voice, when you view the fox away. "Pluck leads you into danger, nerve sees you safely through it." Mr. Warde and Mr. Meynell would never use each other's stallion hounds.

The remarkable proof of Squire Osbaldeston's skill as a hound-breeder was the celerity with which he improved his packs: his quickness over a country was phenomenal; his endurance far above ordinary human. I refer you to his long rides to cover, and his great riding feat on the Beacon course at Newmarket. The late Mr. John Lawrence's offer of £5 to any one who should see a fox kill a lamb was never claimed. Mr. R. Herbert of Clytha concluded a seventeen years' tenure of the reins of the Mons. hunt in 1903; he was presented by his friends with a silver fox. Mr. Herbert is a well-known exponent of many other sports, steeple-chase riding, polo, and shooting; an original member of the National Hunt committee, he founded Ranelagh. We are promised his reminiscences one day. "He sees most of the fun who rides with discretion, and spare the crops in early spring." Major Whyte-Melville says: "It is from the loins that all good riding is done.

Some countries have collars; all have sport. I freely confess that the best of my fun I owe it to horse and hound."

The earliest Badminton kennel-book goes back to 1728. The late Rev. Jack Russell, when eighty years old, rode home seventy miles after seeing a fox marked to ground. Lord Henry Bentinck says, "Begin November with your hounds blooded up to the eyes." Between 1698 and 1800 the Quorn had only two masters, Mr. T. Boothby (fifty-five seasons), and Mr. Hugh Meynell (forty-seven seasons). Of all the latter-day masters, Captain Burns-Hartopp for seven seasons was one of the most popular. Captain Forester, late 3rd Hussars, succeeded him in the year 1905; he had been master of his regimental pack, the Limerick, two seasons, and the old Berks one. "There is almost always a scent on the eve of a frost" (the late Mr. W. C. A. Blew: the *Field*). Foxes are wildest and strongest about Christmas (Beckford).

"Save your horses: no one knows when a run may end." If you have cheap horses, the better you ride, the better you will be mounted. "A number of horses are rejected by wealthy men because they are uncomfortable mounts" (Mr. T. F. Dale: "Stoneclink"). Again, "Without some experience, at least in boyhood, no man is ever likely to attain much proficiency in the saddle, at any rate in the hunting-saddle," the eighth Duke of Beaufort

writes. "In whatever situation an Englishman fixes upon to reside, his love for the chase accompanies him," Cecil tells us, and so on. Here are two or three old saws (not so very old) that will bear repeating. Avoid a country with wire unless that which is left be "well marked." I commend you to Baily's "Annual Hunt Directory" for this information. Ride an Irish horse when you can get one at a moderate figure—not under four years for safety's sake. The leading repositories are the best mediums of purchase, unless you visit Ireland yourself.

In hunting, as with other sports, there are many names of both masters and servants that have long been associated with hounds. Thus, the Carmarthenshire have only changed names three times in fifty years, viz. the United, Mr. Powell's, or Maesgwynne. Mr. W. R. H. Powell's name was a household word in Wales in connection with fox-hunting. For fifty-five seasons, T. Boothby, and for forty-seven, Hugo Meynell ruled the Quorn hunt.

Lord Darlington's name will never be forgotten in the North. Where also are the names of Lane-Fox, Lords Galway, Middleton, Zetland, and Fitzwilliam, those of hunting-men pure and simple. Mr. J. Farquharson hunted all Dorsetshire at his own expense from 1806–58.

How well known are the families of Lord Portman (an M.F.H. for fifty years), the eighth and

present Dukes of Beaufort, Lords Fitzhardinge and Leconfield in the South. Mr. Crozier was M.F.H. of the Blencathra sixty-four years; Mr. J. Lawrence of the Llangibby from 1856–97. Other family packs omitted above are the Belvoir, Brocklesby, and Wynnstay.

Then come the veteran names of Lowther, associated with Quorn and Cottesmore since 1788; further details I cannot go into here; Anstruther-Thomson, M.F.H. in the Shires and of Fife; John Warde, Assheton Smith, and Osbaldeston, who hunted more or less all their lives. The Persses of Galway, the Watsons of Carlow and Meath, the Spencers of Althorp. Mr. Garth reigned fifty years as an M.F.H. Many huntsmen have handed down the post from father to son, viz. the Leedhams with the Meynell, and Smiths with the Brocklesby. Then the Goodalls, Freemans, and Hills are families of hunt servants. J. Baily was huntsman of the Essex, and Bowman of the Ullswater many years; C. Brackley to the Garth thirty-two years. Champion was huntsman to Marquis Zetland thirty-four years. S. Morgan first whip to Lord Galway since 1877; and J. Shepherd, born at the Fife kennels in 1843, never left the country. T. Smith gives up the Bramham Moor this year, and C. Travers the Cotswold. Both have completed over thirty odd years as hunt servants, and there are many other such examples.

CHAPTER XI

STAG-HUNTING

"Ah! hunters forbear! stop the murdering train,
And give the poor creature his freedom again.
See! see! they relent in the glorious strife;
Now they call off the dogs, and the stag has his life."

HAVING mentioned in another chapter some of the chief centres from which stag-hunting can be obtained, I herewith add a few further details of the sport. A meet attended by some three hundred horsemen, the opening meet of the Devon and Somerset, is a stirring sight. Who can gainsay the fact that stag-hunting here has a charm all its own, whether it be from Cloutsham Ball, or Minehead, Linton, o'er the river Taw, a run up Summerhouse Cliffs, or from Haddon? Naturally each season has its one or two record runs, and deer to hunt are the gamest of the game all round. No ordinary fence is high enough, thick enough, or sufficiently close-woven to stop him.

They do tax the farmer's crops, and munch them at dead of night betimes; naturally, compensation is freely offered and accepted. All this on and near Exmoor, the land of "Lorna Doone," where these herds of hungry deer number several hundreds—

over five hundred. The hunt committee of the Devon and Somerset has fixed the minimum subscription for a day's hunting with one horse at half a guinea. This begins in August, and the same crowd, augmented on occasions, flock thither annually. There are, in all, sixteen packs of staghounds in England, and four in Ireland. It is with the Devon and Somerset of sixty couples that I am chiefly dealing with here. Mr. E. A. Stanley is the master; Porlock, Dulverton, and Minehead are the most convenient centres, and the kennels are at Exford near Taunton. Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday are the hunting days. The Surrey (master, Captain W. B. M'Taggart) hunt three days a week. The Enfield Chase, a Herts pack, sometimes three days. Sir J. Amory is at the head of his pack, and hunts twice a week round Dulverton and Tiverton in the west countree. The kennels are in Devonshire—to be precise, at Hensleigh, Tiverton. In fact, staghounds are located chiefly in the south of England, though Lord Ribblesdale and Mr. P. Ormrod jointly started the Ribblesdale last year. They hunt round Clitheroe and Gisburn. The most northerly pack is, however, the Oxenholme—twenty couple. Mr. C. H. Wilson hunts them two days weekly near Milnthorpe and Kendal.

For full particulars of the Berkhampstead, the Berks and Bucks, Mr. Burton's, the Essex, Mr.

Gerard's, Mid-Kent, New Forest, Norwich, Lord Rothschild's, and the Warnham I must refer you to Baily's "Hunting Directory." Of the Irish packs, the Co. Antrim and Templemore hunt two days a week, and the Wards and Co. Down three. An admirable work on this magnificent sport is "Stag-hunting on Exmoor," by Philip Evered (secretary of the pack), to be procured of Chatto & Windus, or the west country publisher, Mr. J. G. Commin. Also that well-known work, "The Queen's Hounds, and Stag-hunting Recollections," by Lord Ribblesdale, Master of the Buckhounds, 1892–95.

The type of horse seen out in late summer and early autumn on Exmoor and the Quantocks has improved year by year. Neither sun nor dust can deter West Somerset folk when stag-hunting is afoot. Where the going is good, it is hard, indeed, for the master to obtain room for his pack to puzzle out twists and turns of the quarry. Among the very large field, indeed, who do Cloutsham annually, you may see many M.F.H.'s free as yet from cubbing, hunting-men from the Shires and Midlands, a sprinkling of Americans—tourists. Yes, and troopers in uniform have been known to put in an appearance, not to speak of cyclists, pedestrians, motorists. On that day papas and mammas fill carriages from friend Thristle's or the Luttrell Arms. For many years there was the stout

farmer, who rode coatless and in flannel shirt: he had fine lungs, too, and was quite a character here.

Hedges are then grey rather than green. For the hot, trying days in the middle of August old horses are much better than young ones. Most of the field do their day's hunting on one horse; although hours are longer and distances galloped longer than in fox-hunting countries, horses last a longer time. However, most of the field bestride "quads" that would be little accounted of in the Midlands. They know their country and are hill-climbers of Exmoor Combes, not so trying to forelegs and tendons as a flying country or one of banks is—comparison this of tortoise to greyhound. About seven years ago, on the Saturday after Barnstaple Fair, a memorable stag led the field to Castle Hill and Umberleigh on the River Taw to such purpose that some of the followers lay out all that night.

Stags, however, are slow to break cover, and the harbourer usually tries to find one with three long points atop on each horn. (It is of the hunted wild deer, not the "carted" deer that I speak of now.) If the harbourer's boots are wet when he reports to the master, so much the better; then there has been rain on the moor: he brings good news. He has slotted a fine stag across the Combes, "brow, bray, and tray, and three on top." A stag

passes so noiselessly along, his bated breath seems the most audible thing about him, though his horns are apt to make a curious rattling noise when rushing through an oak coppice. The huntsman and tufters—steady old hounds—first make their way to the stag's whereabouts. The tufting is done, for the most part, on pony back. A 13-hand Exmoor pony can carry a 9-stone huntsman among the bushy paths and rocky by-ways well. A stag to whom self-preservation is first nature will do anything rather than risk the open, and the young male deer who generally accompanies him he will invariably try to force into his place. His ingenuity is miraculous; he will attempt to drive out any other deer weaker than himself; a stag has been known to turn out another from the furze and appropriate his bed while the hunt was in full cry. Two stags have actually fought in front of the pack as to who should be the scapegoat.

In a work of this sort details of memorable runs, measurements of heads, ages of stags, their jumps over cliffs, their deaths in the water of Porlock Bay, cannot be gone into at much length. It has been often noticed that in a choppy sea, a mile or so from shore, a beaten deer drowns in the curl and wash of the waves.

One of the most appalling spots in Red Deer Land is that bordering on the Severn. To those

who know them, what can compare to the cliffs from Ashley Combe to Countisbury Foreland? Here there are paths and byways that overhang a rock-bound beach by a giddy drop of three hundred feet. Deer, after betaking themselves to the sea here, have swum ashore only to find themselves confronted by hounds and huntsman. It is some years now since his Majesty the King, when Prince of Wales, despatched the first Exmoor stag near Badgworthy Water.

This year a stag jumped over the cliffs at Desolate near the Foreland, and in 1884 one was killed at Glenthorne, followed by five hounds; the stag and three of the hounds were killed. The famous Bratton Run was one of twenty-six miles—time, two hours and twenty minutes. Any stag with two long points on either top may be run; one with three atop on each horn is generally sought for; the animal is then probably not under seven years old. It is a grand cleft in the moors, the Badgworthy Water Valley, called Badgery—one of the grandest on Exmoor. There is no forest here now. Rock and woodland encircle the romantic Doone Valley; here the ruined dwellings of outlaws with whom "Gert Jan Ridd" tried conclusions more than two centuries ago may be seen.

One of the finest heads in stag-hunting history was taken on October 25, 1893, that last day of

that season on the Quantocks. This was near St. Audries, Sir A. Acland Hood's seat. The head had four on one top, and four and an offer on the other. Round outer curve of inner horn, 36 inches; width at fork, inside to outside, 30¼ inches; perpendicular height, 29 inches; under curve of brows, 14 inches. This head, for sheer weight of beam, will probably never be surpassed; it graces the hall at St. Audries, and it is said to be the largest wild trophy ever secured in the British Islands.

So much for the mode of hunting the wild red deer. That of following the carted deer or stags by the other packs of staghounds is another and simpler matter.

The average visitor to Exmoor is a fox-hunter or harrier-man, and his annual visit lasts from three weeks to a month. The winter weather here is too varied and too often doubtful to attract visitors. The first ten weeks, therefore, of the stag-hunting season bring out large fields, so the winter hunting is confined to local sportsmen, twenty to fifty all told. Again, bump of locality and knowledge of woodcraft are most essential on Exmoor, especially when a short cut home is desirable and heavy mists gather suddenly. Mr. E. A. V. Stanley hunted sixty couple here this season. About the middle of October stag-hunting ends, and then, after a week or two of

inactivity, hind-hunting commences. This concludes at the end of March, and is followed by a few more weeks of stag-hunting. Many of the runs after the hinds are never chronicled. It is not the exciting affair that a stag-hunt is. The state of the country affects the sport less than it does fox-hunting. The idle period here lasts only from the beginning of May to the end of July.

I have told you before in this chapter that the fascination of stag-hunting grows and grows; and as for the native of North Devon or West Somerset, he or she is a born hunting enthusiast. However, two days a week can no longer be reckoned on the Quantock side; and the herd in and about Slowly is small. This detracts from Dunster as a hunting centre; does not affect Minehead much. So Porlock, Exford, and Dulverton are now the best centres, while Lynton, Lynmouth, and Ilfracombe accommodate other sets of visitors annually.

Exmoor is a huge country, and there is stag-hunting four days a week. There are the Exmoor foxhounds and harriers when staghounds are out of reach, and always the beautiful air, that combination of moorland and sea air which distinguishes Exmoor from all other hunting localities of the kingdom.

CHAPTER XII

CUB-HUNTING AND AFTER—BECKFORD AND NIMROD

"Where all around is gay, men, horses, dogs;
And in each smiling countenance appears
Fresh blooming health, and universal joy.
. . . . . .
Ha! yet he yields
To black despair. But one loose more, and all
His wiles are vain. Hark! through yon village now
The rattling clamourings. The barns, the cots,
And leafless elms, return the joyous sounds.
Thro' ev'ry homestall, and through ev'ry yard,
His midnight walks, panting, forlorn, he flies."

—SOMERVILLE.

THESE lines of the classic poet of the chase apply as well, nay better, to the regular season to which cubbing is the preliminary canter. In all countries where material and scope admit of two months' preliminary work before the regular season begins, it is of inestimable advantage to start then when farming interests allow. There has been an idea that the hours of evening may be substituted for those of dawn, and it may be interesting to see the system given a thorough trial. Peterborough is the first milestone on the way to another season; then come Goodwood, the Dublin Horse Show, the puppy shows, the festival of St. Grouse, and

the chase of the wild red deer. The strong woodlands of Yorkshire or the Midlands divide the early cubbing with the Meaths and Mr. J. Watson.

There is a peculiar charm attached to hunting in the later days of summer. Nature is clad in her richest hues on a fine September morn; the cleared fields are golden in the morning sun; here and there you come across "sicklemen weary of August," and other sounds so dear to the Englishman. Anything like a gallop is out of the question so early in the season, even should the ground be soft, which it rarely is. It is, of course, a fact that in cubbing it is neither possible nor advisable to evade the responsibilities of a public function. Still, discipline has to be enforced on young hounds, and the instinct of the hunted animal in cubs. So the amount of publicity which is given to cubbing appointments has frequently constituted one of the hardest problems that the M.F.H. has to face during the season. On the whole there is a good deal to be said in favour of advertising; if the practice of sending out fixture-cards be adhered to, a list of fixtures, with names of all who should be notified, has to be kept.

The hunting in November, and perhaps December as well, in great measure depends upon the quality of the cub-hunting. When, as was the case during the tropical summers lately, cubbing had to be postponed owing to the hard ground,

MR. C. F. P. MCNEILL, M.F.H. THE GRAFTON

(Photograph by Messrs. John Burton & Son, Leicester)

the effect upon hounds was disastrous. In return for the concession, where it is granted, it behoves those who turn out to be studious not to occupy a position when they are *de trop;* and remember that the hunt staff should not be hampered or disturbed in what to them is a matter of business.

It is very important that the utmost care be observed with young horses, gross or fractious hunters, in their exercise on cubbing mornings. Moreover, a kick or a blow from one of these horses, bestowed on the young hounds, will undo all the assurance acquired with the hunt horses when at road exercise. Grooms and second horsemen have to be carefully enjoined on this point.

Nine times out of ten hounds are holloa'd away on an old fox unintentionally. For this mistake hounds' feet suffer, which entails endless trouble to huntsmen and kennelmen alike. It is generally agreed that for sharpening up young hounds, and to satisfy the cravings of a rapidly growing field of riders, tactics for keeping cubs within the covert's confines should be abandoned in October. There is some division of opinion as to the "holding up" question at the beginning of the campaign. "The great object of cub-hunting," pleads the champion of old-fashioned methods, "has always been to blood the young entry, and with a good litter on foot, it matters little if a cub or two be chopped at the outset." A more modern

school contends "that plenty of blood is what hounds want." And that three or four brace, no matter how killed, is far better for the pack than a single brace, each of which has fallen a victim to sound persevering work. Without blood, they contend, hounds soon become slack. Later on, perhaps, there will be none too many foxes. That huntsman is cleverest who can strike the happy mean; the intentional disappointment of hounds should be avoided.

In the early stages of cub-hunting it is occasionally of great advantage to dig out foxes, since it teaches hounds the indispensable accomplishment of marking to ground. There is a theory that hounds taken away from an open earth become disappointed, which is open to doubt. They would and probably could understand they had not been wholly outwitted by their fox, unless the latter can be bolted forthwith. An hour's wait during the digging out would hardly be beneficial to hounds, especially if the weather became inclement. When chill November arrives and the regular season opens, no longer are we compelled to rise in the middle of the night to be with hounds, and each week makes a difference once the leaves begin to fall. Unfortunately Nature ordained they should fall into ditches, and a blind ditch leads to more dire disaster than a blind fence. Hedging and ditching,

unfortunately, is not studied so sedulously in some countries as formerly.

I would now give you a run as told by two old-time authorities—Beckford's, the hunting run, and Nimrod's, the riding one. There is nothing cruel or unsatisfactory about Beckford's, while Nimrod's run breathes of desperate demands upon the generous exertions of the horse. Scores of other pens have since told us of the "image of war" in the hunting-field. Beckford's ideas were written well over a hundred years ago, and Nimrod's about eighty. For broad and bold generalism they are "first class."

Beckford's "Thoughts on Hunting," written in his Dorsetshire country, will ever hold its own, though the "moving incidents by flood and field" are perhaps best depicted by Nimrod. The meet is perforce an old-time one.

"The hour most favourable to the diversion," says Beckford, "is certainly an early one; nor do I think I can fix it better than to say the hounds should be at the covert side at sun-rising." "Let us indulge ourselves with a fine morning in the first week of February," writes Nimrod, "and at least two hundred well-mounted men by the covert side. Time being called [*æt.* 1845]—say, 11.15, nearly our great-grandfather's dinner-hour — the hounds approach the furze brake, or the gorse, as it is called."

The one talks of Dorsetshire and its ungovernable woodlands, the other of Leicestershire. Now for "the draw," "the dash into the echoing wood of stately growth," when each hound is seen, nose to ground, drawing steadily on his line. The meet "when all around is gay, men, horses, dogs," the squires talk county business and a groom holds the stirrup for a third. The country fox-hunter talks of turnips, the London one of the play. But hark to Beckford again.

"Now let your huntsman throw in his hounds as quietly as possible, and the whippers-in keep wide of him on each side, so that a single hound may not escape; they must be attentive to his holloa, and ready to encourage or rate as he directs. He will, of course, draw up the wind.

"Now try and keep your brother-sportsmen in order, and put discretion into them, then you will be lucky; they more frequently do harm than good. If possible, persuade those who wish to holloa the fox off to stand quiet under the covert side, and on no account to holloa him too soon; if they do, he will most certainly turn back again. Could you entice them all into covert, your sport, in all probability, would not be the worse for it."

"How well the hounds spread the covert! The huntsman alone, and his horse, not so long ago, had the pack at his heels. How steadily they draw! You hear not a single hound, yet not one

is idle. Is not this better than to suffer from continual disappointment, from incessant babbling of unsteady hounds?"

No doubt, Mr. Beckford, when you have a well-trained pack. Now for Nimrod.

"'Harken, hark! or yooi over in! or eloo in!' holloas, or cries, Mr. Osbaldeston. 'Oh, you beauties!' rapturously exclaims some Meltonian. The gorse appears shaken in various parts; no hounds visible, and then suddenly one or two appear bounding over furze-bushes."

Beckford continues: "How musical their tongues! And as they get nearer to him, how the chorus fills!—Hark! he is found—now where are all your sorrows, and your cares, ye gloomy souls!—or where your pains and aches, complaining ones! one holloa has dispelled them all."

Nimrod's gorse "now shakes more than ever. Every stem is alive, and reminds us of a cornfield waving in the wind. 'Have at him there,' holloas the Squire. Gorse still more alive, and hounds leaping over each other's backs."

Beckford's fox must get away first. We will suppose Beckford to have sat listening, horn in hand, making the following observations. "What a crash they make! and echo repeats the sound. The astonished traveller forsakes his road, lured by its melody; the ploughman stops his plough, and every distant shepherd neglects his flock,

and runs to see him break. What joy! What eagerness in every face!"

A vivid description that. Mention of the shepherd conveys the idea of an unenclosed country; the greater part of Dorset was so in Mr. Beckford's day. Nimrod's fox breaking covert is or was correct in Leicestershire; and, indeed, in some countries where masters have not their field under control, certain gentlemen are satisfied when they see three couple of hounds on the line.

Lord Alvanley's facetious observation after larking home across country, "what fine sport we might have if it was not for those d——d hounds," was a keen satire on Melton fox-hunters. The eager "Snobs" now casts up in Nimrod's run with the hackneyed inquiry of "Do you think you can catch the fox?" But Squire Osbaldeston did not suspect the "Snobs" might be none less than one of the *Quarterly* reviewers.

"Now, huntsman," says Beckford, "get on with your head hounds, the whipper-in will bring on the others after you; keep your eye on the leading hounds, that, should the scent fail them, you may know how far they brought it. . . . The scent being good, every hound settles to his fox; the pace gradually improves—*vires acquirit eundo;* a terrible burst is the result. . . . Mark Galloper how he leads them," says Beckford. "It is difficult to distinguish the leading hound, yet

he is the foremost. His nose is not less excellent than his speed. How he carries the scent! and when he loses it, see how eagerly he flings to recover it again! There, now he's ahead again! See how they top that hedge! Now, how they mount the hill! Observe what a head they carry; and show me, if you can, one shuffler or skirter amongst them all. They are like a company of brave fellows, who, when they engage in an undertaking, share its dangers and fatigues equally."

At the end of nineteen minutes Squire Osbaldeston's hounds came to a fault, but Pastime hits off the scent, and away they go over the cream of Leicestershire. "Not a field of less than forty, some a hundred acres—no more signs of the plough than in Siberia." How different to Beckford's uphill and down-dale Dorsetshire, with its chalky downs and wilderness of woods. How Beckford teaches, when he seems only to aim at amusement, so keen and observing a sportsman is he.

"It was then the fox I saw, as we came down the hill; those crows directed me the way to look, and the sheep ran from him as he passed along. Hounds are now on the very spot, yet the sheep stop them not. Now see with what eagerness they cross the plain! Galloper losses his place; Brusher takes it. See them fling for

the scent and run impetuously! How eagerly Brusher took the lead and strives to keep it! Yet Victor comes up apace: he reaches him! See what an excellent race it is between them! It is doubtful which will first reach the covert. How eagerly they run! How eagerly strain! Now Victor, Victor! Ah! Brusher, you are beaten; Victor first tops the hedge! See there! See how they all take it! The hedge cracks with their weight, so many jump at once!"

The while Nimrod's hard riders press on, "Snobs" gets through his horse. Second horses and the Whissendine Brook follow on; but with the exception of Abigail and Fickle and the head hounds are carrying, we hear little of the pack.

Beckford goes on with: "Now hastes the whipper-in to the other side of the covert; he is right unless he head the fox." That sentence is quite the old sportsman. "It is right, if it is not wrong. . . . Listen! the hounds have turned. They are now in two parts; the fox has been headed back, or they have changed at last. Now, my lad, mind the huntsman's holloa, and stop to those hounds he encourages. He is right! That doubtless is the hunted fox; now they are off again. . . . Still we press too closely on the hounds! Huntsman, stand still! As yet they want you not. How admirably they spread! How wide they cast! Is there a single hound that does not

try? If there be, ne'er shall he hunt again. There Trueman is on the scent; he feathers, yet is doubtful still. How readily they join him! See those wide-casting hounds; they fly forward to recover lost ground! Mind Lightning, how she dashes; and Mungo, how he works! Frantic now pushes forward; she knows as well as we the fox is sinking. . . . Huntsman! at fault at last! How far did you bring the scent? Have the hounds made their own cast? Now make yours. You see that sheep-dog has coursed the fox: get forward with hounds, and make a wide cast. Scent begins to fail; you must not let them hunt; with the scent so cold you can do no good—they must do it all themselves.

"Let them now, and not a hound will stoop again. Ha! a highroad at such a time as this, when the tenderest-nosed hound can hardly own the scent! Another fault! That man at work, then, has headed back the fox. Huntsman! cast not thy hounds now; they have overrun the scent; have a little patience, and let them, for once, try back. See where they bend towards yonder furze brake! I wish he may have stopped there! Mind that old hound, how he dashes o'er the furze; I think he winds him! Aye, there he goes! Now he cannot escape us he is in the very strongest part of the cover. How short he runs! He is now in the thickest of the covert; every hound is running

for him—a quick turn that! and then another. Now Mischief is at his heels, and death is not far off. Ha! They all stop at once; silent, and yet no earth open. Listen! now they are at him again! Did you hear that hound catch view? They overran the scent and Reynard lay down behind them. Now how quick they all give their tongues! Little Dreadnought, how he works him! How close Vengeance pursues!—how terribly she presses! It is just up with him—Gods! what a crash they make! The whole wood resounds!—That turn was very short! There! now—aye, now they have him! Whohoop!" Thus Beckford concludes his run.

Nimrod tells us how the fox did his best to escape, threads hedgerows, tries a farmhouse outbuildings, and turns so short at once, but hounds run shorter as much as to say—"Die you shall!" The pace had been awful for twenty minutes. Three horses blown to a standstill, and few going at their ease. "Out upon this great carcase of mine, as he stands over his four hundred guinea chestnut, then rising from the ground—no horse ever foaled can live at this pace." This from the lips of a young Meltonian. "You will know how 'his tail was nearly erect, and nostrils were distended.' . . . 'Not hurt, I hope,' exclaims Mr. Maxse, as he hears a thud in the next field, and gets a glimpse of somebody coming neck and crop

from the top-bar of a high hog-backed stile. It is young Peyton, who has missed his second horse at the check, who had followed in distress; his nerve and pluck had kept him going to within three fields of the finish. The fall was nearly a certainty, as it was the third bit of timber he had taken, and his horse was blown; he was too good to refuse them, and knew better than to do so."

The pack is depicted as pulling him down in a large grass field, every hound but one at his brush. Jack Stevens with him in his hands would have formed a subject worthy of Sir Edwin Landseer: a blackthorn had opened his cheek, and besmeared his upper garments with blood; his head and cap were besmeared by mud from a fall he has had in a lane—he has ridden the horse throughout the run, and has handled him so well he could have gone two miles farther, had the run continued. Osbaldeston's whohoop might have been heard to Cottesmore had the wind set in that direction. Every man present was in ecstasies. Lord Gardner, Sir James Musgrave, and Colonel Lowther are depicted among those first up. Sir James Musgrave remarks, "What superb hounds are these." "Just ten miles as the crow flies, in one hour and ten minutes, with but two trifling checks, over the finest country in the world." "You are right," replies Colonel Lowther, "they are perfect. I wish my father had seen them do their work to-day."

There is no jealousy among the rest of the field, please note, as they come up by two's and three's and congratulate one another on the day's sport, then each man turns his head towards home.

A burst in the Shires is, as often as not, a quicker thing than this nowadays.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HUNTING-FIELD: ITS MANNERS, AND DISCIPLINE

"Up rouse ye, then, my merry, merry men;
For 'tis our opening day!"

—*The Chough and Crow.*

HUNTING-MEN may be divided into two classes—those who hunt to ride, and those who ride to hunt. Nearly every one belongs to one or the other; there may, however, be a third section, viz., those who hunt because "fashion says it is the right thing to do." "Hounds, gentlemen, please," to which may be added, "Don't motor too close to the meet." This season two eminent M.F.H.'s nearly came by bad accidents owing to motors, and the Craven hounds were motored into. This by the way. If a man has a true knowledge of and passion for the sport, it will force its way out and be understood and admired by his fellows. So it is the real sportsman who is valued and esteemed. Most men enter the hunting-field from a love of riding or a love of hunting—sport pure and simple: a love of that exercise, riding, which used to have such a singular charm for the average English boy, and which never

really leaves him. Take the man who is genuinely bitten by a love of the chase; his keenness may triumph over advancing years; he earns the sobriquet, "good old sportsman." His "eccentricity" is tolerated by many of his friends, who consider hunting a most dangerous form of mania, and whose only participation in manly exercise is the occasional watching of a cricket-match.

Let us pass on. The "rider," he who hunts to "ride," certainly feels the true rapture of the sport; but it is the riding that takes his fancy first, the love of hunting may follow in days to come. The man who rides seldom notices the true element of poetry that undoubtedly underlies every true sport, and the lights and shades of the hunting-day.

The *mise en scène*, though a wintry one, is usually attractive. Doesn't the wind slightly move the leafless trees in the covert which the hounds are drawing? See those water-drops on the trees; they are often a sign of a good scenting day. No, there is none of spring's pushfulness, summer's fulness, or of autumn's decay. Still, the open winter day has its attractions. So the young rider who "hunts to ride" says to himself, like one of those Melton "Bloods" in the old story: "What splendid fun we should have if it were not for those infernal hounds." Then as to the man who "rides to hunt": no minutiæ of hounds,

horses, and woodcraft escape his notice, the wind and weather also. His enjoyment of a "clinking day" comes from hunting knowledge. "Bump of locality," that first essential of a scout, which is and can only be born in the man; he never jumps an unnecessary fence—paradoxical quite to the hunting novice. His theory is, "Save your horse; it may not be three, but ten or twelve miles, this point." This "hunter" never hesitates when he sees the best and the shortest way; then no ordinary fence will stop him. Hound-work and the country's contours are easily read by him; such is the type of sportsman that rarely grumbles though fortune buffets him.

The man who primarily rides to hunt lives in a wider sphere than he who hunts to ride. We might take Charles Kingsley as the ideal sportsman, who, while so keenly enjoying riding, was so thoroughly filled with a deep understanding of and love of the chase. Everything he saw was a fresh inspiration to him, and in his work, "The Winter Garden," with the poet's rare touch, shows us the imagery and good in hunting.

He who rides to hunt is often as good and as hard a rider, and is always a far better sportsman all-round than the "Thruster." The latter is so engrossed with "the pushing along" that he completely loses sight of the hunting. Sometimes the sport simply resolves itself into what we get

when we go to the drag-hunt. A good man to draghounds does not always shine with fox-hounds.

Men not over imbued with keenness often lose their hardness in early middle life, and become quite modest performers. There have also been distinguished hunting-men, born huntsmen, who never enjoyed a reputation for hard riding, and well up in venery. Such an one was Peter Beckford, whose immortal treatise on hunting, though over a century old, is eminently useful to-day. In his day there were more men who hunted for the sake of hunting than now. There were fewer "visitors." The fields were all made up of resident country gentlemen. While to some it is hunting and others riding, there are yet many who seem almost equally at home in both departments. As to overriding the pack, there is far too much of it in many countries to-day. Moreover, fields are larger nearly everywhere now than they were a generation ago. The master may be so easy-going that his good-nature is taken advantage of, or owing to the size of the field it is impossible for him to be everywhere to keep order. Discipline is essential to every hunting-field, though recruits to the sport know not its etiquette. It is doubtless ambition that is at the bottom of most of the overriding. The novice is unconscious that in following So-and-so

he is shamefully overriding hounds. So-and-so may be a leading-light in the hunting-field too.

The harm done to hounds is, that they become slack when hunting slowly and are interfered with. The conditions of the sport may and does vary from day to day, and the thrusting offenders probably drive hounds over the line on a poor scenting day. Many who have no wish to offend are unwittingly lured on to do so, as it is impossible for the second rank to see hounds all the time. Masters are loth to resort to strong language, or peremptorily to take hounds home. It was this that drove Lord Lonsdale to issue a thoroughly straightforward manifesto to second horsemen, when he held the reins of Quorn management. Advice on every private matter cannot be laid down here. Some hunts will, however, have to resort to a stringent code of rules in due course ; Capt. Heywood Lonsdale lately issued a memorandum in the Bicester country as regards strangers.

CHAPTER XIV

SOME NOTED FOXHOUNDS

"Now he pauses a while, till he's roused by the sound
Of the sonorous horn, and the near opening hound;
Down his cheeks the big dewdrops of sorrow fast flow;
As increases the clamour, increases his woe."

THE furore for hound-breeding set in during the first twenty years of the eighteenth century, and in fifty years more the greatest nobles and land-owners were so intent on it that it became more than a mere whim or hobby—a prominent concern in life. Before fox-hunting came into vogue in England all hunting was stag-hunting on forest or moor; the same fashion was here in vogue as in France and Germany. A hound had to be bred suitable for the English method of fox-hunting, and the first hero of hound-worship talked of in the Midlands about 1783 was Trojan. Mr. J. Corbet of Sundorne, Shropshire, owned him. He was a specially brilliant hound by the Duke of Grafton's Tomboy; his dam, a bitch whose pedigree was not traced. Sportsmen, I may add, travelled miles to see him. He led the pack always, we are told. On one occasion he jumped a wall and killed the fox single-handed.

The most prominent hound-breeders about this time were, the Dukes of Devonshire, Grafton, and Beaufort; Lords Lincoln, Yarborough, Vernon, Lichfield, Granby, Percival, and many others. Then it was that "Here's to the Trojans" became a toast at many a hunt dinner. Mr. Corbet took his pack to Warwickshire, composed of few others, it was said, than Trojan's sons and daughters.

In those days hound-breeding was different to now, when a kennel stud-book is ably edited by Mr. Harry Preston of Vine Appleton, near York, a leading follower of the York and Anisty. Then there were no hound lists kept to serve as guides. Hunting-men owe the Rev. C. Legard (another Yorkshire man) a debt of gratitude, as he first started the kennel stud-book. I must now, however, hark back to other celebrated foxhounds of the times of John Warde, John Corbet, and the sixth Lord Middleton.

Henry, sixth Lord Middleton of Birdsall, Yorkshire, was the most liberal hound-buyer and extensive breeder of his time. He is supposed to have bought part or whole of Col. Thornton's pack. For Mr. Corbet's he gave 1250 guineas. This was, we read, a bargain for hounds bred like they were. He is reputed to have had over 2000 hounds through his hands during a long hunting career. He bred largely in Warwickshire and at Birdsall, and bought many hounds from the late

Mr. J. Chaworth Musters, a Quorn master in his day. His lordship considered Vanguard that he bred in 1815 the best hound he had ever seen. He was got by Lord Vernon's Vaulter-Traffic, who was one of the pack purchased from Mr. Corbet. Lord Middleton could boast of much of Trojan's blood in his pack. He gave most of them to Sir Tatton Sykes, and lent him to the then Duke of Beaufort. This pack, however, eventually went back to the eighth Lord Middleton. Most of the Trojan blood, however, was transmitted to the present pack at Birdsall through Mr. Arkwright's Crony, by Lord Middleton's Chanticleer of 1851. Thousands of hounds of to-day are easily traceable to Trojan. Crony, the great-grandam of Driver, was the corner-stone of the Oakley pack; she had the Vanguard blood in her veins too.

Celebrated hounds of the present day are far too numerous to mention here. I have portraits before me of two Peterborough champions in Tancred, Warwickshire champion of 1896, and the Oakley Dandy by Dancer out of Bonnylass, first prize stallion foxhound of 1895 at Peterborough.

I will now pass on to another epoch of the foxhound and his portrait gallery. This time the champion was "The Squire" Osbaldeston's Furrier. This noted master considered there was no equal to his Furrier between 1820 and 1830. He

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE, M.F.H. WARWICKSHIRE

(Photograph by Messrs. Langfier, Ltd., 23 Old Bond Street, W.)

must have owned thousands of hounds in his day too. A hound will always follow the man who shows him sport even before his kennel huntsman. "Devonian" Mr. Harris of Hayne considered Furrier a "jealous beggar." Anyhow, the name of Furrier is still with us and his blood in many a foxhound kennel of to-day. Intelligent reader, please note the scope of this work only allows my treating of "some noted foxhounds," not "all noted foxhounds."

I now pass on to Lord Henry Bentinck's Contest, a direct descendant of Furrier. Contest was lent to the then Duke of Beaufort and Lord Fitzhardinge. Contest was by Comus, son of Mr. Foljambe's Herald, son of Osbaldeston's Ranter, son of Furrier. Sir R. Sutton's Dryden was also by Contest, and his best hound. The baronet's mastership of the Quorn was from 1847-1856. Lord Fitzhardinge's Cromwell by Contest was a regular hound celebrity in Gloucestershire. Their huntsmen never tired of talking of these "star" hounds till their dying days. I cite the cases of John Warde, W. Smith of the Brocklesby, and Charles Payne, whose favourite Pytchley hound was Pilgrim.

Has not this intense love of much-prized hounds made fox-hunting what it is? The excuse is to breed from great merits in the field exclusive of good looks. However, such authorities as the late Mr. G. S. Foljambe, Lord Portsmouth, and the

late Mr. G. Lane-Fox considered that the make, shape, and frame had to be kept up. A hound's faults, as a horse's, are sure to come out in the next generation. Anyhow, we may take it for granted that Lord Coventry's Rambler, the Brocklesby Rallywood, the Belvoir Senator, and Weather-gage, the Grove, Barrister, the "Drake" Duster, the Oakley, Driver, the Grafton Woodman, the Quorn Alfred, and the last great Belvoir hound-hero, Dexter, are front-rank celebrities.

This rejection of faults and even plainness has made foxhounds so superior to other canine families that there are chances of a gem being missed, but they are slight. Furrier of the Belvoir was near being drafted. There is an art in drafting as well as breeding. To an enthusiastic hound-breeder estimating hunting-work is another art; it affords keen pleasure to a fox-hunting enthusiast, such as the late Mr. G. Lane-Fox. The writer thoroughly enjoyed three seasons with the Bramham Moor. One of these was the last, that father of hunting, Mr. G. Lane-Fox, rode to hounds. His favourite hound was Lord Poltimore's Archer; Mr. Lane-Fox bred from him after seeing his field-work. One of his daughters was Affable; her Mountebank was one of the best of the Bramham Moor pack. So much for the keen observation of one who knows.

What of the portraits, of the galaxy of hound

beauties that we may see in the historic shires? G. Stubbs painted Brocklesby Wonder and Ringwood in 1798. Lord Middleton has Trojan's portrait. J. Fearnley, Sir E. Landseer, A. Cooper, C. Hancock, Aiken, W. Barraud, and R. Davis all took noticeable hounds. Vanguard's portrait is also at Birdsall in a picture called "Running to Ground." J. Fearnley took Furrier for Osbaldeston. Mr. T. Drake of Shardiloes has the "Drake" Duster, and the master on a white hunter. Lord Fitzhardinge has the hound Cromwell's head stuffed at Berkeley Castle. Tom Parrington has a picture of the Quorn Alfred. Lord Coventry has one of Rambler and Marksman by Lutyeus; while Dexter was sketched for Sir G. Greenall by Mr. Cuthbert Bradley, and so on.

The question as to the superiority or not of the modern foxhound to his predecessor a hundred years cannot be easily settled. Then the country was somewhat easier for hounds to cross. In appearance the modern foxhound is the superior. It has been said he has not his ancestor's fine nose. It is curious to note that between the times of the great runs then and now the difference is not very marked. Still, our ancestors were not very accurate timekeepers; *e.g.* in the famous match at Newmarket, Mr. Barry's Bluecap is said to have covered four miles in eight minutes! Another run with Lord Middleton's hounds is

timed at fifty-one miles in four hours! Hounds can run a cold scent now as well as ever. In the days long ago hounds were not so much pressed as they are now, and undrained land carried a better scent.

Although a volume this size could easily be written round hound-lore and breeding, some interest may be added to this chapter by tracing the lineage of a few only of the above-noted foxhounds to those of to-day. Such bygone authorities as George Osbaldeston, Lord Forester, and Mr. G. S. Foljambe studied hound merit in a manner almost akin to science. To-day we have many worthy successors to them. It was the Lord Forester who took the Belvoir after 1825, who originated the idea of puppy walking, and introduced the Osbaldeston Furrier blood. This brought the Belvoir to the pinnacle of hound fame on which the pack now rests. The huntsmen, Goosey and then Will. Goodall, were experts in hound-breeding, and introduced the singularly beautiful stamp and type to that kennel. The same traditions were carried on by Frank Goodall and by Ben. Capel to-day. Weather-gage, for instance, bred in 1876, was the hound *par excellence* of the Belvoir pack in his day. His pedigree reads as follows: By Warrior, by Wonder-Susan, by Stormer, by Guider, son of the "Drake" Duster. Weather-gage's dam was

Royalty, by Rambler, by Senator-Remedy, by Rallywood. He also inherited the blood of Sir R. Sutton's Dryden and the Osbaldeston Ranter.

Weather-gage showed faultless excellence in every part of a run, the first all-round. F. Gillard, after an experience of nearly fifty years, considered him the best he ever saw. His son Gambler out of Gratitude beat him for looks, and was probably the grandest hound ever bred at Belvoir. The Weather-gage and Gambler families are very numerous, their prowess in the field being so remarkable there was a keen demand for their progeny. Gambler was the grandson of Dexter, who had as many as thirty-seven lines of the Osbaldeston Furrier in him. Mr. George Osbaldeston once brought out a pack of six-and-twenty couples with the Pytchley all sired by Furrier. Again, Woodman and Worcester of the Vale of White-horse were lineal descendants of Weather-gage.

This year the Belvoir commenced the season with 65½ couple of hounds, and the fresh blood introduced amounted to 11½ couple. The sires Donovan and Dexter are responsible for some of the best of the pack. Stormer is one of the oldest hounds in the pack at nine years, and is one of the Weather-gage family. It is beyond the scope of this work to further dwell on the merits of "Star" foxhounds; every pack has its

best strains. The above hound celebrities probably have descendants in every pack in the United Kingdom.

I quote the following ideas on hound-breeding written by Mr. R. E. Wemyss at Badminton in November 1896. Mr. George Lane-Fox died on the 4th November. I see by Col. J. Anstruther-Thomson's memoirs it may not be generally known that Col. Thomson hunted with 101 packs in all, and Mr. Randolph Wemyss with 56. Mr. Wemyss says: "It is rather a coincidence that three of the historic packs begin their name with a B. The Lord Henry Bentinck who hunted the Burton, it is said, bred the best pack of hounds that ever hunted a fox. Brocklesby by Rallywood, entered 1843, by Basilisk, by Sir R. Sutton's Ringwood out of Brasila, Rosebud by Victor out of Frolic. Will. Goodall, of Belvoir, got him from W. Smith, huntsman at Brocklesby, when he was six or seven years old. He practically made the Belvoir hounds at that time, and at one time Goodall took out hunting one pack of hounds all by Rallywood."

The same gentleman penned the following lines also at Badminton :—

"Belvoir and Brocklesby, Badminton, Burton,
'B,' on the Button, wind up the horn ;
Over the Rides, cheer up the chase, boys,
No matter the kennel at which they were born.

Belvoir for tan, and Burton for wear, sir,
  Brocklesby keeping you well on the line ;
Badminton pies swing along cheerily,
  Finding a scent, be it wild, be it fine.

Shades of the Belvoir, Goosey, and Goodall,
  Smith with the 'Rallywood,' Brocklesby's fame,
Lord Henry Bentinck bred always for dash, sir,
  Badminton hounds, a time-honoured name.

Each have their virtue, all are for hunting,
  Entries put forward soon die away ;
Like many a huntsman and many a sportsman,
  Leaves but a memory of a long bygone day.

Giants there lived in days which have gone by,
  Hounds were they better? or huntsmen? Well, well ;
Keep up your standard, breed only for nose, sir,
  And stoutness, of course, for one can never tell

What sport in the future may somewhere await you,
  What runs we may chronicle, ride through and see ;
But always remember wherever you hunt, sir,
  To look for a Button that's marked with a B."

Notwithstanding the fact that the price of "Noted Foxhounds" was never so high as it is to-day, I propose to lay before you the ideas of perfection according to the fancy of Beckford, Hugo Meynell, and Assheton Smith. The latter gentleman offered and paid 1000 guineas for twenty couple of Mr. Warde's hounds, a very high figure a century ago. Mr. Smith had a peculiar power over his hounds, and they a great fascination for him. Mr. Smith, of course, never fed his hounds in the kennel.

Directly hunting was over, he galloped home on his hack; the whips returning with hounds. Nimrod, we read, considered the finest run that could be ridden would be from Billesdon Coplow to Ranksborough.

P. Beckford tells us, hounds will always go to any one who shows them sport in preference to a person who feeds them. He thought a thin neck was a recommendation. Mr. Smith liked "throaty hounds," for he considered that by getting rid of the throat, the nose also disappears, and a throaty hound invariably had a good nose. Mr. Smith's Nelson, formerly the Duke of Rutland's, was the perfect model of a foxhound of that day: he answered to Hugo Meynell's well-known description of his ideal hound: "Short back, open bosom, straight legs, and compact feet." Again, Beckford's ideal during a previous epoch to Meynell's was: "Let his legs be as straight as arrows, his feet round and not too large, his chest deep and back broad, his head small, his neck slim, his tail thick and bushy; if he carries it well, so much the better." Judges of the foxhound there are not a few, and breeders and enthusiasts several score to-day with whom these ideals probably still hold good.

To-day the breed probably stands as near perfection as it can, and I gather that F. Gillard's record of foxes killed with the Belvoir hinges on that, and will take some beating for all time. From

1870 till 1896 this famous huntsman killed 2709 foxes. Considering how much they are on the grass, it must be admitted that most packs in the shires throw their tongue well. Cry, in the opinion of many, is nearly as important as nose or drive, so these three attributes are most valued in the shires and grass countries. The cry of a pack that hunts in the open is wonderfully improved by hunting in the woodlands now and again, and other things besides scent can aid in the inspiration of a rousing chorus. To revert, however, to the name of one of the fathers of fox-hunting, Mr. T. Assheton Smith, fifty years in all an M.F.H. He had several hounds of Burton blood in his kennel, among them Tomboy, notorious for always bringing home the fox's head, no matter how distant the kill.

The great Duke of Wellington was a constant visitor to Tedworth and admirer of hounds at Mr. Assheton Smith's seat in Hants. How the Iron Duke chose his gallopers, and considered fox-hunters and public-school boys the best soldiers is somewhat extraneous to this work. However, Eton claims Mr. T. Assheton Smith and Mr. G. Osbaldeston, M.F.H. of the Quorn twice, 1817–21, and 1823–27; while Hugo Meynell, M.F.H. Quorn, 1753–1800, was a Harrow boy. Thousands of other like cases can be easily brought to mind by any reader of these lines.

Mr. Assheton Smith would give any price for good hounds. He offered Lord Forester 400 guineas for his bitch Careful, also 100 guineas to Mr. Conyers for Bashful. A few more prices of hounds early in the nineteenth century, and I pass on to the twentieth. In 1812 the then Lord Middleton gave 1200 guineas for Mr. Mytton's pack; but their owner had played such tricks with them they would hunt anything, "from an elephant to an earwig." Mr. Horlock gave Mr. Warde 2000 guineas for his when he gave up the Craven country in 1825.

The scope of this work does not admit of details of various Peterborough hound shows now ancient history. It is a generally accepted truism that there is no hound to compete at all with the well-bred English, Scotch, or Irish foxhound, not only for hunting the fox, but also as an improver of other kinds of dog. When you consider the popularity of fox-hunting nowadays, it is no wonder that the best hounds will fetch almost any money. I would remind you that G. Osbaldeston's bitches fetched 100 guineas each, and Lord Poltimore's hounds topped that figure early in the nineteenth century. And so at the sale of the South Cheshire hounds in May 1907 Lord Lonsdale gave 125 guineas each for two first season bitches, Hecuba and Warcry, and nearly 2000 guineas for 15½ couples. It was said that Lord

Galway's hounds fetched £4500, Earl Fitzwilliam being the purchaser last year. It is an open secret that an American sportsman would buy either the Belvoir or the Warwickshire, presumably Lord W. de Broke's, for £10,000, if he could get the chance; and a gentleman from the United States has actually offered £500 for two brood bitches at Belvoir strolling about the park in whelp. They are natural and developed products of these islands, and there is a demand for them in every country; abroad, however, through want of management, difference of climate and soil, they deteriorate. No foreign imported hound has ever benefited our breed. The late Mr. Merthyr Guest was induced to try three studhounds from the United States, but without success.

Now that we have perfection in hounds and to sum up, Mr. G. Osbaldeston's Furrier was acknowledged the best up to his day, 1821. Since then there have been scores of hounds as good, and many probably better—to witness, the Belvoir pack, one of which Dexter hunted when he was ten and showed marvellous constitution. The late Lord Willoughby de Broke estimated the cost of his Warwickshire pack in many thousands, and was one among the finest of hound judges of his day.

CHAPTER XV

STRAIGHT TALKS ON HUNT SUBSCRIPTIONS—ENTHUSIASM OF NEW BLOOD—THE STATUS OF SHIRE AND PROVINCE

"'Tis the first of November! all hail to the season
The first of November, right welcome the day!
Far, sacred Diana, from Nimrod the treason
Of taking thy gifts without owning thy sway.

Sweet goddess! what muse can most fittingly sing thee;
What crescent thy lovely brow worthily grace?
. . . . . .
Our cubs—bless their brushes! the farmer has nourished,
Our puppies his gudewife most lovingly reared.
. . . . . .
The nags fit and fresh from the meadow and boxes—
The men, proud as peacocks, in liveries new—
Oh! happy array, servants, hounds, horses, foxes,
Oh! thrice happy master of such a review!

See yonder the meet, right and left hearty faces,
Leathers, cords—black and red—all are smiling and bland;
Hunters, foot people, tandems, hacks, village carts, chaises,
And, the pink of perfection, the neat four-in-hand.

Such a meeting of friends that have 'not met for ages,'
Old goers and young ones, the shufflers, the crack,
While the hounds in a corner sit silent as sages,
Twelve couple of beauties, the sweet lady pack!"

—*Baily's Magazine.*

STARTLING as the statement may seem, we will suppose that some hunts are blessed with a superfluity of cash, while others (the majority) are at

times in want of funds. There are a large number of hunts neither too wealthy nor poor that can always raise the necessary guaranteed money, yet are always a trifle in debt. And there are a number of sportsmen who, from one motive or another, "get out" with the lowest possible subscription annually. If a hunt debt has to be carried forward, a few generous members may wipe it off or not; the small subscriber, if asked, would probably willingly give his share. One of the most difficult and thankless duties of a committee is the regulation of subscriptions, no one's susceptibilities need be wounded at these suggestions; they are merely part and parcel of twentieth-century fox-hunting.

There may be nothing to be said against the custom to graduate hunting subscriptions on a scale of five-pound notes in the shires; but in a provincial country, where the majority hunt from home, the question is different. Take the one-day-a-week man who subscribes £10. It is a big jump for him to subscribe £15. However, £12 he might pay. Any small addition of this sort would prevent that balance debt of £100 or so against the hunt that we hear of at the annual spring committee meetings. I confess I do not like the system of sending round the hat for hunting expenses or any other objects.

The subscriptions to the West End clubs are not graduated on a level money scale. Why should

a level money scale be decreed for hunting subscriptions? Now as to the superfluous wealth said to be floating about the fashionable shires. The original idea was that if you wish to limit your field so as to prevent overcrowding the scale of subscriptions should be raised. Caps are an institution in several countries now. In the Bicester country this year a stringent order anent strangers has been promulgated. Young Midas would perhaps pay £100 for the privilege of hunting in the shires, rather than he would £5 or £10 to hunt in a provincial country, and in the latter he would probably see more sport in a day than he would during a whole season in the shires. It is surely more pleasure to hunt where your money will be useful and your society appreciated, than to ride in a madding crowd as an unknown unit. We do hear the axiom, "A hunting crowd rejoices in itself," which, as Mr. Gilbert might say, sounds very pretty, but I don't understand the meaning of it. How can we offer advice to fashion? It is no joy (presumably) to the genuine hunting-man to form one of a fashionable gathering.

The suggested remedies for overcrowding do not hold out much hope. If an M.F.H. or secretary refused the subscription of a new-comer on the ground that there was not room for him, that master would be sure to become unpopular.

The quarrel engendered would become an awkward one, as the hunting-field is open to all, according to an unwritten law. I cannot imagine a case of a subscription being refused from an unobjectionable person for the sole reason that there was no room for him. The annual cry is, however, "Still they come." There is no wish to-day that less people should hunt: it is that their money should be more evenly disseminated.

A magazine exploited the idea not many years ago (five, to be exact) that the old system of hunt clubs should be reintroduced; that the club should be a social one, and new members only admitted as a vacancy occurred. They should have the exclusive right of hunting. The scheme's feasibility broke down at first sight. How are you to obtain your exclusive right? How enforce the rights if the sporting public refused to recognise it? Besides, exclusive hunting rights were practically abolished here by a Lincolnshire gentleman called Robin Hood at the end of the twelfth century. As matters now are, some countries are (and always will be) deserted while others are overcrowded.

How can you make a deserted country attractive to hunting-men? The late Mr. Assheton Smith answered this when he made the Tedworth country, though he encountered the strongest opposition from his own father. The Rev. "Jack" Russell

hunted foxes in Devonshire ; previously they had been done to death with sticks and stones. If we turn back the pages of hunting history we find that it was not so much money as sheer pluck and determination on the M.F.H.'s part which made hunting popular, where previously the sound of the horn had been unknown. The M.F.H. must have something more than the mere promise to preserve foxes, and the committee's guarantee of money. The assistance of the residents during the summer is also required. We may have lost many of the country squires owing to the depreciation of rents ; still, others have taken their places.

The merchant and lawyer now as often as not live in the country near the town where they carry on business. They acquire the tastes of country gentlemen ; a dozen packs or more are kept going by London residents alone. As a rule he is anxious to promote sport, and give no offence to his predecessors on the land, who are still in some parts presumed to be the country sportsmen. He, the merchant, may be and is the best of fellows, and hopes to win influence with the farmers ; still, he is as often as not on the horns of a dilemma. If he keeps aloof he is called lukewarm. It is said of him his money is all right ; he is a good man to hounds, but outside the hunting-field he does nothing for the sport. The M.F.H. should and often does give him every encouragement to

help summering the country. If he is still further encouraged I feel sure we should not hear so much of deserted provincial countries. Let the M.F.H. make use of the new blood! Much of the new blood is neutral, perhaps, to sport. Enthusiasm that mostly consists of bluster is an unmitigated nuisance.

No doubt work as well as talk is a *sine quâ non* in every sport. It is easy to ride your hobby-horse to death. The "new blood's" enthusiasm should be directed into the proper channels. You may persuade tenant-farmers to preserve foxes and remove wire, but it is no use badgering them about it. Ask his opinion as a friend before you buy a horse. You need not act upon his advice; but every farmer likes to be thought a good judge of a horse. Flattery is often more efficacious than straight talk to gain a desired end.

However, Baily's "Foxhunting Directory" (5s.) gives you a detailed list of all the packs in the United Kingdom.

Since the days of "Nimrod" and his contributions *re* noble science of fox-hunting in general to the *Sporting Magazine*, information about the doings of various packs has multiplied exceedingly. Even in Nimrod's days accounts of the runs were tame at the end of a fortnight. One of the oldest accounts of a hunting run is (so I gather), one penned in 1807 by the Hon. M. Hawke in the

county of broad acres. The style is partly verse and partly prose. Subject, "The Sessay Run."

Old hunting history has but meagre accounts of runs; for instance, we are told Col. Thornton backed a Hambleton fox to stand up for twenty miles before hounds, and that the gallant fox won the colonel his bet; except that the fox was a Hambleton one, no further particulars are forthcoming. Col. Thornton did not leave many graphic accounts of his hounds' runs and their matches; still, he made a sporting tour to France. Much hunting literature that passed muster in the early fifties would now be classed as "hunting buffoonery." After Surtees' and Cecil's days many regular hunting correspondents became accredited to the papers. The hunting correspondent who goes out, say, four days a week, has arduous duties to perform. If he be a sportsman he has little to complain of, even though his be not a bed of roses. His presence is scarcely or ever questioned, so he is probably a *persona grata*. Next to the hunt servants he is the hardest-worked person who goes out hunting. He has some trouble to make out the "points" of a run, and give those incidental touches which brighten up his narrative. This information is very hard indeed to get sometimes. The letters he receives from brother-sportsmen are nearly always genial and friendly. There are critics and critics. The greatest annoyance to him

is an accident to himself or sickness in his stable. If laid up, his brother-sportsmen generally keep him well informed as to the doings of hounds. Another sore annoyance to him is leaving hounds to get his "copy" off, and this may be the run of the season; a tired horse may have to be hurried home, over rough roads, too. This will naturally try a man's temper.

CHAPTER XVI

STATISTICS OF THE PRESENT DAY

"At length, returned from joyous chase,
With mirth, we'll end the day,
Which soon to Morpheus giving place,
We'll sleep our toils away."

IF hunting were to cease, a large market for many goods, it is well known, would suffer. How great is the annual or even daily sum involved in the upkeep of hunters and hunting accessories it is difficult to arrive at. Mr. R. Ord, an ex-master of hounds and still secretary to his hunt, estimated that 200,000 hunters were kept, which have cost their owners £10,000,000, and involved the annual expenditure of something like £7,500,000. Again, the estimate of 200,000 horses is a very low one indeed. Of the 250 riding packs in the United Kingdom many are out on an average three days a week, many are out four, a few five and even six. The two-days-a-week packs are not particularly numerous. In these days fields are large, almost everywhere, except in a few remote countries. Twenty women hunt for every one who followed hounds a generation ago, and the fashion of having a second horse out becomes

more general every day. Then the popularity of hunting is on the increase; many M.F.H.'s maintain studs outside the hunt horses, and so do many members of hunts. For that matter, scores of people hunt four, five, and six days a week, and in many provincial hunts there are several who never miss a day in their pack. In the most popular countries fields of from three to five and six hundred are not uncommon. Many hunters average one full day or two half days each week. A man who does not keep many horses will rarely hunt one oftener than three days a fortnight. Great allowance must, however, be made for the horses which are *hors de combat.* By Christmas-time in an average year the percentage of horses who become lame or have sore backs is enormous. The supply must be recruited; so the farmer or dealer will benefit in the long run. If not, the owners either hire or turn harness nags into hunters.

I next come to the value of hunters, and give you the opinion of no mean expert, who gave it to the hunting world in the *Field.* The estimate of 200,000 hunters costing £10,000,000 makes the hunter's value £50; but not one real hunter in fifty is bought for that sum. Only the man who is skilled in horse-flesh, and is not particular what he rides, can indulge in these sort of nags. The average hunting man or

woman pays £50 for a young sound hunter, and the "made" hunter in his "third," "fourth," or "fifth" season at auction seldom goes below £50; and those who go to Tattersall's or follow the auction sales at the chief marts know full well these horses realise from £200 to £500 apiece. To gauge the price of the raw material, a few young horses at any of our leading dealers' yards should be priced. Supposing a hunting-man has the time and the desire to "make" his own hunters, the raw material can be purchased at a fair price, at, say, three or four years of age. A good field for this speculation lies (or did lie) among the farms and fairs of Ireland.

A farmer can almost always dispose of a young horse of hunter stamp without much difficulty, but he has to part to the dealer at a lower price than to the hunting-man. To revert to the 200,000 horses I mentioned above, if there were no use for them the markets for them and their fodder would be weakened. If hunting were to cease or die out, the country districts would languish. Country houses would be closed, and much money would be spent in London and on the Continent. The farmer is most affected by the presence of the resident hunting-folk and visitors. The small country towns would also feel the depression. Without entering too fully into the subject, the meat, milk, and grain markets

would become most depressed. I may incidentally add that the most prosperous country places are those best served by market and transit. The closing of country houses after the shooting season would be a heavy financial loss to both tenant-farmers and their landlords.

Statistics are dry reading. These, however, are a few for the present season. Among the stag-hounds, the Berks and Bucks, the Devon and Somerset, the Enfield Chase, and in Ireland the Co. Down, have new masters; the Devon and Somerset, and South Westmeath changed to fox. Lord Ribblesdale was welcomed as a new-comer, and two hunts dropped out. Two packs, the Berks and Bucks and Lord Ribblesdale's, both have joint-masters.

As regards the English and Welsh packs of foxhounds, Mr. H. W. Wells', Mr. W. B. Partridge's, and Mr. W. Gordon Canning's, the Afonwy, Llangammarch, and the Brecon make up the new packs instead of the Thurstonfield and Mr. Scrope's. The amalgamated countries were Cheshire, The Hambledon, Earl Fitzwilliam's, and Viscount Galway's. A pack that changed its name was the Stevenstone owing to the lamented death of the Hon. Mark Rolle. New masters had to be found for sixteen packs. Among them the most important were the Cheshire, Cottesmore, and Essex and Suffolk; while partnerships were dis-

solved between Lord C. Bentinck and Mr. E. Lubbock (owing to the latter's death) in the Blankney, Earl Huntingdon and Col. W. Dobson, N. Staffs, and Mr. T. H. Spry and Mr. J. A. Cooke-Hurle of the Lamerton. The reunited Hambledon kept one of their old masters, Capt. W. P. Standish. Sir Hugo Fitzherbert replaced Mr. Penn Sherbrooke in Yorks. Of course Earl Fitzwilliam assumed the leadership of his united country. The only other M.F.H. enjoying the dual distinction is Mr. W. E. C. Curre, M.F.H. of his own and the Monmouth packs. This made twenty-six changes with English packs; while Lord Southampton assumed the mastership of the E. Kilkenny and Lord de Clifford gave up his pack in Mayo during the season. Early in the season the Ormondes, an old-established pack in King's Co., had to be given up owing to the action of the V. I. League. One lady master entered upon this season in Ireland, Miss E. Somerville, with the West Carbery. Here we have two, in Mrs. Hughes, Neuaddfaur, and Mrs. Burrell, North Northumberland.

The peerage is represented by the Dukes of Beaufort and Westminster, Lord Lonsdale, Lord C. Bentinck, Marquis of Zetland, Earl Manvers, Earl of Yarborough, Earl Fitzwilliam, Earl of Harrington, Lord H. Nevile, Lord Fitzhardinge, Lord Middleton, Viscount Portman, Lord Annaly,

Viscount Helmsley, M.P., and Viscount Tredegar; and in Ireland, Lord Southampton and Marquis of Waterford (21).

The baronetage and knightage are represented as follows: Sir G. Greenall, Bart.; Sir T. Hume-Campbell, Bart.; Sir H. M. Fitzherbert; Sir E. W. Pryse, Bart.; Sir W. Cooke, Bart.; Sir W. Austin; Sir R. Rycroft, Bart., and Sir W. Wynn, Bart. The Right Hon. J. W. Lowther, M.P., and four other M.P.'s come in here. Hon. G. W. H. Russell (since Viscount Boyne), and Hon. C. E. Russell, Mr. G. R. Lane-Fox, and Mr. D. Davies.

Among the retired naval and military officers are Lt.-Cols. C. E. Goulbourn, P. J. Browne, C. B. Godman, J. A. F. Garratt, and Cardwell, D. F. Boles, A. C. Newland, E. H. Brooke, H. Lewis, and Major C. Jackson; Capts. Christie, W. P. Standish, R. Heygate, Spence Jones, F. Forester, R. Haig, H. A. Kinglake, Viscount Tredegar; Messrs. F. B. Atkinson and A. Scott-Browne.

The Church is represented by two: the Revs. E. A. Milne and E. M. Reynolds.

The grand total number of foxhounds for England and Wales is 170.

The six-days-a-week packs being the Duke of Beaufort's, the Cheshire, Lord Harrington's, and Lord Leconfield's; the Border, the Cattistock, the East Cornwall, the Flint and Denbigh; the

H. H., the Silverton, the Southwold, the Tetcott, and the Western are under joint management, and one, the Farndale, is in the hands of a committee. I do not deal with the large number of resignations and changes on the cards, ere next season commences.

As to opening days in the last season, I may record the interesting fact that the Fenny Compton Wharf meet was actually the seventy-fourth consecutive opening fixture of the Bicester attended by that staunch fox-hunter, Mr. Knott, whose memory must therefore go back even to the days when the first Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake hunted the country, and no other than Will Goodall, of subsequent Belvoir fame (sire of the equally illustrious "Will the Second," twenty-one years huntsman to the Pytchley), was turning hounds to Tom Wingfield. This is an extraordinary fox-hunting record to look back upon.

Among those who last season greeted the new Master of the Tedworth on his first day was another unfailing Nimrod, Mr. J. T. Powell, of Easton Royal, who has not missed an opening meet in that country for sixty-two years, and delights to recall the days when as a youth he saw the celebrated Assheton Smith and his grey-pie pack bring many a stout Wiltshire fox to book. These veterans are always interesting to listen to, and Mr. Powell recounts the story of that

glorious Tedworth run of 1858, when they found as bold a fox as ever stood before hounds at Manningford Bohune, and with irresistible drive ran all along the Pewsey Vale, through Savernake Forest, and right on to Hungerford, where they killed in the harness-room at Standen House—"nineteen miles as the crow flies, a nice bit farther, allowing for turns, and just five minutes over the two hours."

Every country has its honoured "Father of the Hunt," whose heart is still in the sport, though in his declining years he may be able only to get occasional glimpses of it from the pony-trap. There are, however, wonderful instances on record of nonagenarian followers of hounds; and it was only last winter that the death occurred of Mr. Richard Gillow, the father of the Vale of Lune Hunt, who hunted up to the age of ninety-eight; whilst Mr. Robert Abbott, the oldest member of the Bilsdale Hunt—ninety-three or ninety-four, I think, is what he confesses to—not content with the performances of his own pack alone, must needs ride over the border now and again "just to see what the Hurworth are doing." Dryden's well-known lines—

> "Better to hunt in fields for health unbought
> Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught"—

have often been laid with flattering unction to the fox-hunter's soul; but surely in the cases just

enumerated we have proof positive to-day that, barring accident, hunting is conducive to long life, health, and happiness, the three greatest blessings mortal man can have.

No more notable examples of longevity promoted by sport with horse and hound have been furnished than by our M.F.H.'s themselves. The late Mr. John Lawrence was still in office as Master of the Llangibby when, at the age of ninety-four, he paid his last debt to Nature a few seasons ago. Though unable to ride to hounds during the last six or seven years of his life, it was wonderful how he used to get across rough country "on wheels," and thus he managed to see a good deal of the sport almost to the last, but a spill from the carriage unluckily caused a broken leg, and that, it is to be feared, hastened his regretted death. He had been Master of the Llangibby since 1856; but, for a long period before he took to foxhounds, he had shown sport with his Cwmbran harriers, and it is estimated that his hunting career lasted altogether something like seventy-six years. Perhaps there was never a more touching incident in the annals of fox-hunting than when what was supposed to be his ninetieth birthday—it was afterwards discovered to be his ninety-first—was celebrated by the presentation to him of his portrait; and it was a mere superfluity on the part of the reporter

"THE BADMINTON SWEEP WHAT HUNTS WITH THE DUKE"

About 1833 at Eighth Duke of Beaufort

who stated that a lump came in the throats of those present when the venerable sportsman in his reply declared: "I cannot ride to hounds now, yet I do assure you their music is very, very dear to me." At Biggleswade Mr. George Race still keeps a pack of harriers, as he has done since 1840, and in 1907 started his sixty-seventh season as an M.F.H.; in fact, the proud distinction is his of having held one office for a longer period than any other master, whether of foxhounds, staghounds, or harriers, for he has passed the record of the late Mr. John Crozier, who for no fewer than sixty-four years was Master of the Blencathra foxhounds in one of the wildest and roughest regions of Cumberland.

No longer an M.F.H., Mr. Robert Watson, of Ballydarton, can yet carry his thoughts back over nearly sixty years of active managements of the Carlow and Island hounds, which were hunted by his father before him; and if asked to what he attributed his great vitality, even at the present day, like Colonel Anstruther-Thomson (who lived to publish "Eighty Years' Reminiscences"), he would, in all probability, answer with the familiar line, "I owe it to horse and to hound." Only a few seasons ago Mr. Watson was paying a visit to the Meath country (over which his son has ruled so successfully), and he astonished every one by getting away with the hounds and re-

maining in front during a quick thing in the southern country. Being complimented upon the sensation he had created, the veteran replied, with just a suspicion of scorn in his tone: "What! did they expect to see me come out in a bath-chair, then?"

Among Irish M.F.H.'s at present in office Mr. de Salis Filgate now holds the longest record, for he has hunted the Louth Country since 1860, while in England the distinction belongs to Lord Portman, for, although his father nominally held the mastership during his lifetime, his active superintendence of the pack dated from 1858. There have been several other masterships of half a century and upwards. Not many seasons ago the late Mr. T. C. Garth celebrated his jubilee as M.F.H. shortly before his retirement; and to go back into earlier pages of hunting history, we find the late Mr. T. Walton Knolles kept the sport going in the South Union country in Ireland for fifty years or more, and that Devonshire has known a mastership of similar duration—that of Mr. Elias Tremlett, a contemporary of the Rev. "Jack" Russell. Then the famous Squire Farquharson hunted an enormous tract of country comprising the South Dorset and much of the Blackmore Vale and Cattistock from 1806 to 1858, six days a week, and at his own expense; Mr. Boothby, father of "Prince" Boothby, had a

record as M.F.H. of fifty-five years; and Mr. John Warde ("Glorious John") must have kept foxhounds almost as long, though he moved so much from one country to another that one cannot be exact as to dates. Undoubtedly these long reigns in times past and present, setting up as they have done an example of steadfast devotion to the sport, have done much to strengthen the position of fox-hunting in this country, and the wish naturally arises that many of those sportsmen who are showing us good sport to-day may, in due time, celebrate their jubilee also.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

BILLESDEN COPLOW POEM

[*From "Reminiscences of the late Thomas Assheton Smith, Esq."*]

THE run celebrated in the following verses took place on the 24th of February, 1800, when Mr. Meynell hunted Leicestershire, and has since been known as the Billesden Coplow Run. It will only cease to interest, says a writer in the *Sporting Magazine*, when the grass shall grow in winter in the streets of Melton Mowbray. They found in the covert from which the song takes its name, thence to Skeffington Earths, past Tilton Woods, by Tugby and Whetstone, where the field, as many as could get over, crossed the river Soar. Thence the hounds changing their fox, carried a head to Enderby Gorse, where they lost him, after a chase of two hours and fifteen minutes, the distance being twenty-eight miles. A picture descriptive of this famous run was painted by Loraine Smith, Esq., who was one of the few who got over the river, and was until very lately in the possession of Robert Haymes, Esq., of Great Glenn, Leicestershire. In this painting, which shows the field in the act of crossing the Soar, we see Mr. Germaine, who has just crossed it, and was the only one out that day who did so on horseback. Mr. Musters is in the middle of the stream, and on the point of throwing himself off his horse, who is too much distressed to carry him over. The other horsemen in the picture are Jack Raven the huntsman, Lord Maynard,

and his servant, who are all three coming up towards the stream. Mr. Loraine Smith, "the Enderby Squire," who of course well knows the locality, is crossing a ford on foot, and leading his horse, higher up the stream. The hounds are seen ascending the hill on the opposite side, in full cry, leaving Enderby village and church to the left. The song was written by the Rev. Robert Lowth, son of the eminent Bishop of London of that name. The reverend divine was one of the field, being on a visit at Melton at that time, and wrote the song at the request of the Honourable George Germaine, brother of Lord Sackville, afterwards Duke of Dorset, in consequence of some incorrect accounts of the run which had been published.

POEM ON THE FAMOUS BILLESDEN COPLOW RUN

By the Rev. Robert Lowth

"Quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui."

With the wind at north-east, forbiddingly keen,
The Coplow of Billesden ne'er witness'd, I ween,
Two hundred such horses and men at a burst,
All determined to ride—each resolved to be first.
But to get a good start over-eager and jealous,
Two thirds, at the least, of these very fine fellows
So crowded, and hustled, and jostled, and cross'd,
That they rode the wrong way, and at starting were lost.
In spite of th' unpromising state of the weather,
Away broke the fox, and the hounds close together:
A burst up to Tilton so brilliantly ran,
Was scarce ever seen in the mem'ry of man.

Appendix I

What hounds guided scent, or which led the way,
Your bard—to their names quite a stranger—can't say;
Though their names had he known, he is free to confess,
His horse could not show him at such a death-pace.
Villiers, Cholmondeley, and Forester made such sharp play,
Not omitting Germaine, never seen till to-day:
Had you judged of these four by the trim of their pace,
At Bibury you'd thought they'd been riding a race.
But these hounds with a scent, how they dash and they fling,
To o'er-ride them is quite the impossible thing;
Disdaining to hang in the wood, through he raced,
And the open for Skeffington gallantly faced;
Where headed and foil'd, his first point he forsook,
And merrily led them a dance o'er the brook.
Pass'd Galby and Norton, Great Stretton and Small,
Right onward still sweeping to old Stretton Hall;
Where two minutes' check served to show at one ken
The extent of the havoc 'mongst horses and men.
Such sighing, such sobbing, such trotting, such walking;
Such reeling, such halting, of fences such baulking;
Such a smoke in the gaps, such comparing of notes;
Such quizzing each other's daub'd breeches and coats:
Here a man walk'd afoot who his horse had half kill'd,
There you met with a steed who his rider had spill'd:
In short, such dilemmas, such scrapes, such distress,
One fox ne'er occasion'd, the knowing confess.
But, alas! the dilemmas had scarcely began,
On for Wigston and Ayleston he resolute ran,
Where a few of the stoutest now slacken'd and panted,
And many were seen irretrievably planted.
The high road to Leicester the scoundrel then cross'd,
As Tell-tale [1] and Beaufremont [2] found to their cost;

[1] Mr. Forester's horse.

[2] Mr. Maddock's horse.

And Villiers esteem'd it a serious bore,
That no longer could Shuttlecock [1] fly as before;
Even Joe Miller's [2] spirit of fun was so broke,
That he ceased to consider the run as a joke.
Then streaming away, o'er the river he splashed,—
Germaine close at hand, off the bank Melon [3] dash'd.
Why so stout proved the Dun, in a scamper so wild?
Till now he had only been rode by a Child.[4]
After him plunged Joe Miller with Musters so slim,
Who twice sank, and nearly paid dear for his whim,
Not reflecting that all water Melons must swim.
Well soused by their dip, on they brush'd o'er the bottom,
With liquor on board, enough to besot 'em.
But the villain, no longer at all at a loss,
Stretch'd away like a d—l for Enderby Gorse:
Where meeting with many a brother and cousin,
Who knew how to dance a good hay in the furzen;
Jack Raven [5] at length coming up on a hack,
That a farmer had lent him, whipp'd off the game pack.
Running sulky, old Loadstone [6] the stream would not swim,
No longer sport proving a magnet to him.
Of mistakes, and mishaps, and what each man befel,
Would the muse could with justice poetical tell!
Bob Grosvenor on Plush [7]—though determined to ride—
Lost, at first, a good start, and was soon set aside;
Though he charged hill and dale, not to lose this rare chase,
On velvet, Plush could not get a footing, alas!
To Tilton sail'd bravely Sir Wheeler O'Cuff,
Where neglecting, through hurry, to keep a good luff,

[1] Lord Villiers' horse.
[2] Mr. Musters' horse.
[3] Mr. Germaine's horse.
[4] Formerly Mr. Child's.
[5] The name of the huntsman.
[6] The huntsman's horse.
[7] Mr. Robert Grosvenor's horse.

Appendix I

To leeward he drifts—how provoking a case!
And was forced, though reluctant, to give up the chase.
As making his way to the pack's not his forte,
Sir Lawley,[1] as usual, lost half of the sport.
But then the profess'd philosophical creed,
That "all's for the best,"—of Master Candide,
If not comfort Sir R., reconcile may at least;
For, with *this* supposition, *his* sport is the best.

Orby Hunter, who seem'd to be hunting his fate,
Got falls, to the tune of no fewer than eight.
Bashan's king,[2] upon Glimpse,[3] sadly out of condition,
Pull'd up, to avoid of being tired the suspicion.
Og did right so to yield; for he very soon found,
His worst had he done, he'd have scarce glimpsed a hound.
Charles Meynell, who lay very well with the hounds,
Till of Stretton he nearly arrived at the bounds,
Now discover'd that Waggoner[4] rather would creep,
Than exert his great prowess in taking a leap;
But when crossing the turnpike, he read ☞ "Put on here,"
'Twas enough to make any one bluster and swear.
The Waggoner feeling familiar the road,
Was resolved not to quit it; so stock still he stood.
Yet prithee, dear Charles! why rash vows will you make,
Thy leave of old Billesden[5] to finally take?
Since from Legg's Hill,[6] for instance, or perhaps Melton
Spinney,
If they go a good pace, you are beat for a guinea!

[1] Sir Robert Lawley, called Sir Lawley in the Melton dialect.
[2] Mr. Oglander, familiarly called Og. [3] Mr. Oglander's horse.
[4] Mr. C. Meynell's horse.
[5] He had threatened never to follow the hounds again from Billesden, on account of his weight.
[6] A different part of the hunt.

'Tis money, they say, makes the mare to go kind;
The proverb has vouch'd for this time out of mind;
But though of this truth you admit the full force,
It may not hold so good of every horse.
If it did, Ellis Charles need not bustle and hug,
By name, not by nature, his favourite Slug.[1]
Yet Slug as he is—the whole of this chase
Charles ne'er could have seen, had he gone a snail's pace.
Old Gradus,[2] whose fretting and fuming at first
Disqualify strangely for such a tight burst,
Ere to Tilton arrived, ceased to pull and to crave,
And though fresh*ish* at Stretton, he stepp'd a *pas grave!*
Where, in turning him over a cramp kind of place,
He overturn'd George, whom he threw on his face;
And on foot to walk home it had sure been his fate,
But that soon he was caught, and tied up to a gate.

Near Wigston occurr'd a most singular joke,
Captain Miller averr'd that his leg he had broke,—
And bemoan'd, in most piteous expressions, how hard,
By so cruel a fracture, to have his sport marr'd.
In quizzing his friends he felt little remorse,
To finesse the complete doing up of his horse.
Had he told a long story of losing a shoe,
Or of laming his horse, he very well knew
That the Leicestershire creed out this truism worms,
"Lost shoes and dead beat are synonymous terms."
So a horse must here learn, whatever he does,
To die game—as at Tyburn—and "die in his shoes."
Bethel Cox, and Tom Smith, Messieurs Bennett and Hawke,
Their nags all contrived to reduce to a walk.

[1] Mr. Charles Ellis's horse. [2] Mr. George Ellis's horse.

Maynard's Lord, who detests competition and strife,
As well in the chase as in social life,
Than whom nobody harder has rode in his time,
But to crane here and there now thinks it no crime,
That he beat some crack riders most fairly may crow,
For he lived to the end, though he scarcely knows how.

With snaffle and martingale held in the rear,
His horse's mouth open half up to his ear;
Mr. Wardle, who threaten'd great things over night,[1]
Beyond Stretton was left in most terrible plight.
Too lean to be press'd, yet egg'd on by compulsion,
No wonder his nag tumbled into convulsion.
Ah! had he but lost a fore shoe, or fell lame,
'Twould only his sport have curtail'd, not his fame.
Loraine,[2]—than whom no one his game plays more safe,
Who the last to the first prefers seeing by half,—
What with nicking[3] and keeping a constant look-out,
Every turn of the scent surely turn'd to account.
The wonderful pluck of his horse surprised some,
But he knew they were making point blank for his home.
"Short home" to be brought we all should desire,
Could we manage the trick like the Enderby Squire.[4]

Wild Shelley,[5] at starting all ears and all eyes,
Who to get a good start all experiment tries,
Yet contrived it so ill, as to throw out poor Gipsy,[6]
Whom he rattled along as if he'd been tipsy,

[1] Said to have threatened that he would beat the whole field.
[2] Mr. Loraine Smith.
[3] A term of reproach.
[4] Where Mr. Loraine Smith lives
[5] Usually very grave.
[6] Sir John Shelley's mare.

To catch them again; but, though famous for speed,
She never could touch [1] them, much less get a lead.
So dishearten'd, disjointed, and beat, home he swings,
Not much unlike a fiddler hung upon strings.

An H. H. [2] who in Leicestershire never had been,
So of course such a tickler ne'er could have seen,
Just to see them throw off, on a raw horse was mounted,
Who a hound had ne'er seen, nor a fence had confronted.
But they found in such style, and went off at such score,
That he could not resist the attempt to see more:
So with scrambling, and dashing, and one rattling fall,
He saw all the fun, up to Stretton's white Hall.
There they anchor'd, in plight not a little distressing—
The horse being raw, he of course got a dressing.
That wonderful mare of Vanneck's, who till now
By no chance ever tired, was taken in tow:
And what's worse, she gave Van such a devilish jog
In the face with her head, plunging out of a bog,
That with eye black as ink, or as Edward's famed Prince,
Half blind has he been, and quite deaf ever since.
But let that not mortify thee, Shackaback; [3]
She only was blown, and came home a rare hack.

There Craven too stopp'd, whose misfortune, not fault,
His mare unaccountably vex'd with string-halt;
And when she had ceased thus spasmodic to prance,
Her mouth 'gan to twitch with St. Vitus's dance.

[1] Melton dialect for "overtake."

[2] These initials may serve either for Hampshire hog or Hampshire Hunt.

[3] A name taken from Blue Beard, and given to Mr. Vanneck by his Melton friends.

Appendix I

But how shall described be the fate of Rose Price,
Whose fav'rite white gelding convey'd him so nice
Through thick and through thin, that he vow'd and protested [1]
No money should part them, as long as life lasted?
But the pace that effected which money could not:
For to part, and in death, was their no distant lot.
In a fatal blind ditch Carlo Khan's [2] powers fail'd,
Where nor lancet nor laudanum either avail'd.
More care of a horse than he took, could take no man;
He'd more straw than would serve any lying-in woman.
Still he died!—yet just how, as nobody knows,
It may truly be said, he died "under the Rose."
At the death of poor Khan, Melton feels such remorse,
That they've christen'd that ditch, "The Vale of White Horse."

Thus ended a chase, which for distance and speed
It's fellow we never have heard of or read.
Every species of ground ev'ry horse does not suit,
What's a good country hunter may here prove a brute;
And, unless for all sorts of strange fences prepared,
A man and his horse are sure to be scared.
This variety gives constant life to the chase;
But as Forester says—"Sir, what KILLS, is the PACE."
In most other countries they boast of their breed,
For carrying, at times, such a beautiful head;
But these hounds to carry a head cannot fail,
And constantly too, for,—by George,—there's no tail.
Talk of horses, and hounds, and the system of kennel,
Give me Leicestershire nags, and the hounds of Old Meynell!

[1] At the cover side a large sum was offered for it.
[2] Mr. Price's horse.

APPENDIX II

A LEAF FROM THE "PYTCHLEY"

[By H. C. B.]

Up at last! What a summer's day!
Soft, and sleepy, and still!
Just a whisper of wind caresses my cheek
As I breast the top of the hill.
Golden and grey the sky above;
Meadows—golden and green below.
'Twas a different picture met my eye
Only a short six months ago!

For the leafy branches bend and sway,
And murmur in sweet unrest
A vague response to the sun's fierce rays,
And a promise but half expressed;
Softly the feathery blossoms fall,
Disturbed by the zephyr's breath,
In a quivering shower of summer snow,
On to the soft green turf beneath.

How the buried thoughts of a day "gone by"
Come swiftly hurrying back!
They are here once more! I can see them all—
The field and the bustling pack;

So I sit me down, and I close my eyes—
Forgetting life's cares and ills—
And lose myself in a rattling burst
Of an eight-mile point to the hills.

There is the old fox-covert, larches, and oak, and fir,
And gorse. At the corner, waiting, are the cream of Leicestershire,
Mute, and anxious, and hopeful, hardly daring to stir.
Not a voice is heard, not a whisper, not a breath of wind in the air.
Silence! such tension if prolonged
Would be more than one's nerves could bear.

But the gorse is bending, and shaking; bracken, and brush, and fern
Are torn and riven asunder by muzzle and waving stern,
As Reynard within eludes them by many a wary turn.
It's getting too hot to hold him; the covert rings with the cry
Of that glorious Pytchley chorus, that maddening melody,
As twenty couples of "ladies" proclaim that this fox shall die.

He's scarcely a second before them; he cannot much longer stay.
See! the whip's cap high on the sky-line! At last they've got him away.
Yonder he goes at the corner, and the whisk of his brush seems to say,
"You'll have to gallop, my beauties, if you mean to catch me to-day!"

Appendix II

Shall I repeat the story? No; it were best untold.
Forty fair minutes he took us—minutes more prized than gold;
Than gold refined in the furnace, than the wealth of Golconda's store—
And they pulled him down in "the open." 'Twas an eight-mile point—no more.

APPENDIX III

THESE lines were penned by Mr. H. Cumberland-Bentley for his "Songs and Verses," in memory of Captain "Bay" Middleton, who was killed near Rugby in 1895. Other notable hunting-men killed by falls from their horses have been: Henry, third Marquis of Waterford, March 29, 1859; Major J. G. Whyte-Melville, December 5, 1878; Captain Jock Trotter in Worcestershire (he had been M.F.H. of the Meaths ten seasons); Captain Park-Yates, M.F.H. N. Cheshire; and in 1907 the widely mourned and lamented Lord Chesham, &c. &c.

R. I. P.

CLAD in the scarlet that he loved to wear,
Whip still grasped firmly in the stiffening hand.
They found him lying there;
And to the crowded gathering on the hill
Swiftly the tidings sped;
And strickened voices whispered in dismay,
"Bay" Middleton is dead!

Dead—in the glorious strength of manhood's prime,
Dead in the promise of the sweet spring-time,
. . . . . .
And so . . .
With solemn pace and slow,
They bore away what once rejoiced in life
And now in death lay low.

Appendix III

Tears falling fast—good-bye, dead friend, good-bye !
Good-bye ; brave heart, that never yet knew fear !
In the hereafter we shall meet again,
Although not here.
You have our tears, our prayers,
These fragrant blossoms white
We lay upon thy bier. . . .

And in the future, in the many days
That will so swiftly come, so swiftly go,
We still shall grieve thee gone ! and you perchance
That we thy loss are sorrowing still may know.
And we shall miss you at the covert-side,
Or when the hounds are drawing "Scotland" wood,
Or "go away" with breast-high scent, we still
Shall miss the gallant figure leading us
In the quick burst across the Cottesbrooke Vale,
Or at the "meeting," when the oft-heard cry
Rings out no more, "'Bay' wins on Doneraile !"

. . . . . .

Tears falling fast—for we have left you now
In God's own acre. May you find repose !
Done with all pain, all sorrow, all regret ;
Sleeping a dreamless sleep, until one day
A glad awakening may your eyes unclose.

. . . . . .

The author regrets that portraits of Hugo Meynell, T. Assheton Smith, Colonel J. Anstruther-Thomson, the eighth and present Duke of Beaufort, and many more noted fox-hunters have been unavoidably crowded out of this work.

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